DISSENT

The Post-McCarthy Atmosphere	MICHAEL HARRINGTON
Collectivism Reconsidered	G. L. ARNOLD
Instinctivistic "Radicalism"	ERICH FROMM
The "Guaranteed Annual Wage"	FRANK MARQUART
The Folklore of Populism	RICHARD HOFSTADTER
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The Thirties: Fact and Fantasy	IRVING HOWE
The British Left in the 1930s	WILLIAM J. NEWMAN
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The CIO Faces Automation	GABRIEL KOLKO
The Middle-Class Hero	HARVEY SWADOS
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AUTUMN 1955 75c

DISSENT

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The purpose of this magazine is suggested by its name: to dissent from the bleak atmosphere of conformism that pervades the political and intellectual life of the United States: to dissent from the support of the "status quo," now so noticeable on the part of many former radicals and socialists; to dissent from the terrible assumption that a new war is necessary or inevitable.

The accent of DISSENT will be radical. Its tradition will be the tradition of democratic socialism. We shall try to reassert the libertarian values of the socialist ideal, and at the same time, to discuss freely and honestly what in the socialist tradition remains alive and what needs to be discarded or modified. We are, it goes without saying, unalterably opposed to all forms of totalitarianism, both of the Fascist and the Stalinist varieties.

DISSENT is not and does not propose to become a political party or group. On the contrary, its existence is based on an awareness that in America today there is no significant socialist movement and that, in all likelihood, no such movement will appear in the immediate future.

DISSENT will not have any editorial position or statements. Each writer will speak for himself. Our magazine will be open to a wide range of opinion, though naturally our editorial emphasis will be such as to favor those contributions which help reestablish socialist thought and value. At the same time we shall welcome any expression of competent thought or scholarly contributions touching upon our area of interest, even if these dissent from DISSENT.

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DISSENT

VOLUME II
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A QUARTERLY OF SOCIALIST OPINION

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Two Years of Dissent

To Our Readers and Friends

(and critics too)

For a quarterly to indulge in a retrospect after two years of existence might seem a little premature. But those who know the difficulties of publishing a magazine like DISSENT may forgive us the indulgence. Besides, there may be some use in saying a few words, informally, about our present situation, our future, and some of the criticisms that have been made of the magazine.

I

The handicaps that beset us are known to many of you. That DISSENT has survived, and in a modest way made its mark, strikes us as a kind of miracle. Whatever the shortcomings of the magazine, and we are not the last to recognize them, the fact remains that it has gradually come to be recognized as a voice of the democratic left in America, and that it has won more support than any of us had dared to hope.

Last fall, when we asked our friends for financial help, we promised that if the necessary sum was raised no further appeals for funds would be made until the fall of 1956. Though the figure was not quite reached, our promise will be kept, and DISSENT will continue to appear.

II

Slowly, we have begun to build up a group of regular contributors, many of them new writers. It is a source of genuine satisfaction to us that an atmosphere of fraternal collaboration has been established between the editors and the almost 50 authors who have appeared in our pages these past two years.

Equally gratifying is the fact that throughout the country there are now people who look upon DISSENT as *their* magazine, in the sense that it expresses some of their values with regard to our political and cultural life. For some readers our title suggests their main source of interest; for others, it is the subtitle; and for still others, it is both title and subtitle, the two in a useful if sometimes uneasy relation.

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Journal of the Quarter

The Post-McCarthy Atmosphere

During the past few months ex-Senator Harry Cain has defended the Fifth Amendment; a Senate Committee has expressed doubts about the workings of the Attorney General's "Subversive List"; the State Department, in an orgy of issuing passports as an aftermath of the Shachtman decision, has remembered the days of its lost glory only in the case of Paul Robeson. And in Iowa a minister grappled with a townsman and took away his anti-Communist picket sign as the junketeering Russian farm experts came within sight. At times, it all seemed like the Red Skelton skit in which a drunk comes home to a room in which the furniture has been nailed to the ceiling.

As a result, the happy notion has been appearing in some circles that the hysteria has passed and the United States is now entering a period of rational reform in the area of civil liberties. Almost all writers agree that major problems remain, but their attitude could be summed up in this statement of John B. Oakes in the *New York Times Magazine*:

> . . . if the change of atmosphere indicates that we may be emerging from an era of mutual mistrust, recrimination and misunderstanding, that in itself would be a noteworthy development. It would mean that a more rational and temperate discussion of the internal security problem might become possible than has been possible for several years.

Basic to this attitude is an implicit, and significant, assumption. It is assumed that the repression in civil liberties is identical with its more hysterical manifestations, that the recent unpleasantness was a case of "mutual mistrust, recrimination and misunderstanding." Given this starting point, optimism is quite logical and reform is the corollary of the passing of the McCarthyite mood. But what is omitted from this analysis is a failure to recognize the profound change with regard to civil liberties which has taken place in the past decade, the fact that any "temperate discussion," any reform, will operate according to a set of premises and within institutions new to American democracy and hostile to civil liberties.

Because of this, we are confronted with the paradox that *an immediate consequence of some of the reforms which may take place will be to legitimize anti-libertarian principles even at the moment that their administration is made more lenient or rational.* Thus, when the Senate Committee objected to the malfunctioning of the Attorney General's List, it implied an acceptance of the "principle" of such

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lists. And when the press cried out at the denial of a commission to Ensign Landy, it did so largely on the grounds that the criterion of guilt by kinship (prolonged association with one's mother) had, in this case, been misapplied. Presumably, if someone did engage in a "prolonged association" with his "subversive" mother, that would prove him guilty of something.

Thus, a basic difference in analysis follows when one sees the last decade as having marked fundamental institutional changes in regard to civil liberties rather than as ten years of gratuitous administrative hysteria. As the McCarthyite mood passes, this basic structural transformation should become more apparent. Here and now, it is important to understand this fact in order to define the limits of the present relaxation of tension.

THE WORLD OF CIVIL LIBERTIES in the last ten years is a strange place of quasi-criminality and quasi-judiciality still theoretically ruled by the Constitution of the United States. Theoretically, its major principle is the doctrine of "conspiracy." This concept is basic to almost every repressive measure, public and private, that has taken place in the last ten years. As long as it remains prevalent, anti-libertarianism is a logical, inevitable deduction and not a matter of administrative error.

The formal statement of the conspiracy doctrine was made, of course, in the Eugene Dennis case. The definition developed out of Section 3 of the Smith Act which made it criminal *to conspire to advocate* at some future date the overthrow of the Government by force and violence. In Justice Vinson's reinterpretation of the "clear and present danger" test, a legal doctrine of future crime was defined; in Justice Jackson's sweeping concurrence, political conspiracy was placed on the same level as the economic conspiracy enjoined under the anti-trust laws.

But far more important than the legal theory was the political attitude which the conspiracy doctrine implied. It indicated a way of seeing. All Stalinist activity was conceived of as conspiratorial, mass political movements were thought of in terms more applicable to a paranoid putsch, the epochal occurrence of the colonial revolution was spoken of as if it had been invented by Owen Lattimore and the Institute of Pacific Relations. America was unable to understand the tremendous power of anti-capitalism and anti-imperialism on a world scale and sought plotters rather than social forces.

Given the conspiratorial definition of *all* Stalinist activity, (and, often enough by inference, all radical activity), it followed that police methods were justified in dealing with distasteful or hateful ideas and an area of exception to the Bill of Rights was created. It was therefore just as logical for Representative Walter to ask an actor about his union affiliation as it would have been to question a known safecracker about the dynamite in his valise. Union membership and dynamite, in the world of the conspiracy doctrine, are both evidence of possible criminality.

Thus the distinction between the Stalinist espionage apparatus and the legal activities of the Party (not to mention those of radical groups with no espionage or any other apparatus) was blurred, if not obliterated. Actions which had been afforded the protection of the Constitution now entered into a demimonde of quasi-

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criminality. The Attorney General's List arbitrarily and *ex post facto* interdicted a whole series of personal associations. The loyalty and security program treated relationships with mothers and fathers, husbands and wives, as proper for governmental scrutiny.

Soon the conspiracy theory began to be used with regard to private employment. Sidney Hook took a legal doctrine which had begun at three removes from a vaguely defined criminal activity, turned it into a metaphor and discovered an educational conspiracy. The conclusion was, of course, that a Communist should not be allowed to teach. Political criteria came into use in various areas of nonsensitive hiring, in television, in the case of union membership, in the matter of fitness to be a member of the Bar. The Attorney General's List found its way into personnel offices throughout the nation.

The point of this brief review is not simply to recount how bad things have been. It is rather to show that an entire area of exception to the Constitution has been created, and that the theoretical justification of this fact follows from America's way of seeing in the cold war. What we face, then, is something far deeper than a mood. It is a coherent, internally consistent articulation of a complex political attitude. And in a decade, through the conspiracy doctrine, this point of view has become firmly embedded in the American tradition.

THE INSTITUTIONAL EXPRESSION of the conspiracy doctrine has been a quasi-judicial structure of boards, congressional committees and government agencies. For the attack on civil liberties has taken place in an area of governmental bureaucracy, and the denial of liberties has been achieved under administrative rather than judicial procedures. The quasi-criminality of the conspiracy theory was thus contained within a quasi-judicial structure, and the excesses of the star chamber were therefore inevitable and not a matter of administrative error.

As an example of this point, consider the nameless accuser. These informers have flourished in all of the Loyalty and Security Programs, Government, Coast Guard, Army, Industrial, etc. Once it was assumed that radical political activity was conspiratorial, it was logical that these unsavory figures should come to the fore. Informing, after all, is the traditional method of dealing with criminal rings. And since this testimony was heard before quasi-judicial boards, and not in courts, the normal rules of evidence did not apply. Neither, for that matter, did the normal inhibitions upon the Government's right to ask questions—about wives, friends, casual associates.

Probably the most important aspect of the Max Shachtman case was not the theory of the "natural right to travel." It was rather the judicial assertion of authority over these quasi-judicial boards, in this instance the State Department Passport Division. But in the Dorothy Bailey and Joint Anti-Fascist Refugee cases, the Supreme Court refused to come to grips with this problem. And in the Peters case there was an interesting revelation in the analysis of why the Supreme Court based its judgment on a technicality: *that if Peters' rights had been determined on the basis of the issues which he raised, the loyalty and security program might not have been able to continue to function.*

And yet, until there is some such

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decisive ruling, the reform of anti-libertarian administration, the calming of the hysteria, must take place within narrow limits, i.e. it must leave the fundamental basis of the attack on civil liberties intact. The conspiracy doctrine and its inevitable institution, the star chamber, remain. All the questions and the informers, the revision of constitutional freedoms, *these too remain.*

It is in this context that the present relaxation of attacks upon civil liberties must be placed. The last decade has not been simply a pathology of unfreedom, a hysteria. It has been a time of a coherent institutional development of an attack on basic rights proceeding from premises which characterize all of America's thinking and acting in the era of the cold war. The Attorney General's List, the Smith Act trials, the Internal Security Act, the Loyalty and Security Programs, the Humphrey Communist Control Act, may be the result of insane assumptions, but given these assumptions the pattern they develop is rational and calculating.

Seen in this perspective, it is clear that the present relaxation can restore jobs, grant passports, limit the rights of the faceless accuser and so on. And no one in his right mind will dismiss these victories as meaningless. For many individuals they are a restoration of rights and as such they are of great importance. But even while admitting this, it is important not to be tricked into a rash optimism. For almost all of these cases have been peripheral to the basic premises and institutions of the repression of civil liberties. With the passing of the McCarthyite mood, the real threat becomes apparent: not merely the hysteria and the insanely repeated points of disorder, but the proper, the well-fed and soft-spoken voice of repression, the *legitimized* institutions of unfreedom.

MICHAEL HARRINGTON

AND MORE TO COME!

Some readers have written to inquire about articles we announce and then don't print. The answer is simple: we are heavily stocked with general essays and studies (which is not meant to discourage further contributions!) and some of them have to be put aside for more topical pieces. Gradually the general articles are getting printed, and those people who have inquired about the Benno Sarel article, for example, should be patient. It will appear. Already in type for the next issue are: BEN SELIGMAN'S excellent study of the economist Keynes; ANDRIEUX and LIGNON's essay on factory life; HENRI RABASSIERE'S "The Right to Be Lazy." Also on hand: an article on Islam by EDOUARD RODITI; "The Politics of Psychological Testing" by JOHN BENNETT; "Juvenile Delinquency and Class Conflict," by GILBERT SHAPIRO; "Masses and the Elite," by E. V. WALTER, and much, much else. AND there will be a CUMULATIVE INDEX of our first two years of publication. Don't miss the Winter issue!

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THE "GUARANTEED ANNUAL WAGE"

Frank Marquart

When the new contract between the United Automobile Workers union and Ford was signed last spring, Walter Reuther said, "It is one of the most historic agreements that we have written in the twenty years of our union." Shortly afterwards, General Motors also accepted a similar contract—and a flood of editorials and speeches broke loose in the country hailing or bemoaning the "Guaranteed Annual Wage" (GAW). Much of this comment, it can be said without hesitation, was based on ignorance, both that which saw GAW as a long creep toward "creeping socialism" and that which saw GAW as proof that under our "dynamic democracy" the pressures of the class struggle had been removed.

The facts themselves warrant neither of these melodramatic conclusions. And it is to the facts that we propose to turn.

I

For Reuther the new agreements are important mainly because he sees them as a breakthrough toward the GAW. The June *Automobile Worker,* UAW's official organ, shows a group of auto workers struggling to hoist a flag marked "Guaranteed Annual Wage," their task still unfinished. Compared to the GAW program as it was spelled out in steward classes and in carloads of union literature, the guaranteed pay *principle* nailed down in the Ford, General Motors and other contracts proved to be a considerably watered-down affair.

Worked out by Ford's Harvard Business School boys, the plan is officially titled "Unemployment Supplemental Pay" in the contract. To create a $55 million fund over a three-year period, Ford will earmark five cents for every hour worked by each employee. From this fund the company will supplement unemployment compensation benefits, beginning one week after the worker gets laid off, to reach a possible maximum of 65% of his take-home pay for four weeks and 60% of his take-home pay from then on up to twenty-six weeks. Benefits will be paid out according to a highly complex system based on the amount of seniority and work credits accumulated by each worker. (Actually two funds will be set up: one for auto workers and one for defense workers

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because the latter are more susceptible to layoffs.) Liability for the Ford company ends if and when the $55 million fund falls below 4% and until such time as it reaches that figure again. For GM the fund is set at $150 million.

Workers with at least one year's seniority will accumulate credits as follows: For each week (a week is defined as thirty-two work hours or more) worked between June 1, 1955 and May 31, 1957, a one-fourth credit; beginning June 1, 1957, for each week worked a one-half credit. When laid off, the worker uses up credit units for each week of supplemental unemployment pay, and when he exhausts his credits his supplemental benefits end. The number of credits surrendered for a week's supplemental unemployment pay depends on the percentage in the trust fund at a given time and on the amount of seniority accumulated by the worker. Not until a year is up and not until the fund exceeds four per cent can any payments be made. Should fund reserves reach from four to twelve per cent of $55 million, laid-off Ford workers will surrender credit units as follows: less than five years seniority, ten units a week; five to ten years, five units; ten to fifteen years, 3.33 units; 20 to 25 years, two units; over 25 years, 1.67 units.

How do auto workers react to the guaranteed pay plan? To say that they are disappointed is to understate their mood. Bring up the subject with men from the shop and soon you will hear remarks like these ranging from intelligent criticism to narrow-minded complaints: "The most important part of the plan we didn't get—the 40-hours call-in pay." (The original UAW program had specified that a worker called into work would have to be guaranteed 40 hours of work, or pay, for that week.) "Maybe it will help the guy with little seniority but I've got lots of seniority so it can't mean much to me." "How can the union claim we get that nickel when it goes into a fund? I'd sooner have it in my pay check." "We are told we'll get a guaranteed annual wage, but all we'll get is a little extra unemployment compensation . . . "

In their training courses UAW chief stewards are taught to "look for the gimmicks" when a grievance is referred to them. Right away they began searching out the gimmicks in the guaranteed supplemental pay plan and they found problems like this:

> Two men with equal seniority, drawing approximately equal take-home pay, are laid off the same day. One is married, with four children, and the other is single. This is in Michigan. The married man draws $73.50 in take-home pay when he works. He gets $40 from public compensation. But 65% of his $73.50 is $47.78—so he is allowed $7.78 from the supplemental pay kitty.
>
> The bachelor earns $74.10 in take-home pay when he works. Public compensation pays him only $30 a week. Since 65% of his take-home pay is $48.17, his drag on the kitty is $18.17

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Needless to say such arithmetic does not help to make the plan more popular in the shops. "The more you read the fine print the less you think of the plan," one steward told me.

While editorial writers and union leaders praise the plan as the beginning of a new economic era, the men and women who machine the parts and assemble the cars are not so deeply impressed. One does not have to talk very long with auto workers to realize that their dissatisfaction over the contract is by no means limited to the inadequate supplemental unemployment pay provision. (For the plain truth is that, despite all the education that was conducted among the membership, most rank and file workers did not understand the union's GAW program and therefore were not too excited about it at any time.) Because of the high-powered publicity, they were led to expect much more than the supplemental pay provisions in the contracts. But far more basic is the discontent over what the contract fails to do about shop-level working conditions and wage inequities.

For example, the Ford Rouge skilled workers staged a prolonged stoppage when they learned that the contract granted them only eight cents an hour instead of the 40 cents needed to bring their wage rates into line with those prevailing in jobbing shops. Another stoppage occurred in the GM Willow Run plant when the cutter grinders failed to get into the skilled trades classification as they are at Ford. At membership meetings called to get these men back to work, union officials were howled down and each time the strikers voted to continue their walkout. It took a court order to get them back to work. Admittedly the UAW will have a tough problem on its hands as long as skilled workers in the captive auto shops earn up to fifty cents an hour less than those in the outside shops.

If skilled workers, who for the past five years have had steady work, with plenty of overtime thrown in, are not too impressed by the guaranteed pay provision because they feel it does not touch their basic needs, the same can be said for many production workers. The July 16, 1955 issue of *Dodge Main News,* official organ of UAW Local 3, began its lead story like this:

> What Dodge workers need more than anything else is a guaranteed work week. The assembly divisions, such as paint, trim, body shop final assembly, have not had a full forty-hour week since May. Steady employment for Dodge workers has been an illusion, outside of skilled trades and parts of machine shop and foundry . . . Dodge workers working short work weeks will not be able to collect unemployment compensation, let alone the inadequate supplement to unemployment compensation. . . . If the company is not able to provide a forty-hour week then we should demand a 30-hour week with 40-hours pay.

The struggle to maintain an active shop steward system with ade-

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quate grievance machinery can arouse auto workers to a higher fighting pitch than can the demand for a supplemental pay plan. This was evident during recent Chrysler negotiations when management insisted on reducing the number of chief stewards in the automotive body division from 432 to 49. When Local 212, which has contractual jurisdiction over the 30,000 workers in Chrysler ABD informed its membership about the company's offensive against the shop level bargaining structure, the effects in the plants were electrical. "We'll maintain our steward system even if we have to hit the bricks for the next 12 months," was the attitude expressed repeatedly around the union hall. Compared to this basic and vital trade union issue, the GAW seemed like a pale abstract principle to the workers.

A delegate to the last UAW convention expressed in clear, forceful language the sentiment that is widespread among auto workers:

> Every time we get certain economic benefits from the corporation, we, back in the factories and the shops, find that the company tries to take our demands that we have gotten from them in hard-fought fights out of our hide, out of our back, out of our sweat. . . . the resolution talks in terms of the union not sacrificing principles for money. As far as I am concerned I am in wholehearted agreement with that theory but that means to me that there is no point in getting any economic concessions or gain from the corporation unless our union is in a position to protect and retain the rights that we have in the shop.

II

Reuther is often hailed as the outstanding labor statesman who has abandoned outmoded business unionism for broad social objectives like the GAW. "It will not do to confuse the GAW with just another wage increase or fringe benefit or unemployment compensation boost. It is a far-reaching social economic and political philosophy and it should be discussed as such," writes the *Wall Street Journal*. "The demand for the GAW is a new deep-going demand upon capitalist society for security for the whole working class," wrote Ben Hall in *Labor Action*. "The agreement between the Ford Motor Co. and the Auto Workers Union is a landmark of industrial democracy," opined the New York *Post*. So from right, left, and center the supplemental pay plan is seen as a first step in social pioneering.

But how much security *will* be achieved by the plan? Admittedly it is a roundabout way of overcoming labor's weakness on the political field by its strength at the bargaining table. What labor can't get from Congress and the state legislatures, Reuther will try to wrest from corporations which he believes can afford longer-term social benefits. As the *New Statesman and Nation* observed:

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> . . . the unions are likely to achieve more, and not merely for their own members, by industrial action than by pouring their funds and energies into the endless ramifications of the American political system. The UAW, for example, has backed candidates in elections, has indeed done more than most unions to swing its members behind sympathetic politicians and in doing so has seen how limited is the return for great effort.

More than one visiting trade unionist from Europe has commented on Reuther's "Syndicalist" approach—the attempt to win political ends by trade union means. The foreign unionists believe that by forcing corporations to pay old age pensions and supplemental unemployment benefits there will be a demand for the federal or state government to underwrite private funds. Should Ford or General Motors funds for supplemental unemployment benefits become exhausted, state and federal authorities will be under great pressure to meet the standard set in private contracts. The UAW magazine *Ammunition,* May 1955, points out that unemployment benefits first drawn by jobless workers in 1938 amounted to an average of 43 per cent of the wages they had been earning. "Last year it had sunk to about 32 per cent. This lag behind wage rates, which had risen markedly since the law was first passed, shows up in greatly depleted purchasing power and hurts the entire economy," the magazine says. By blocking liberalization of state unemployment compensation legislation, by inserting countless fishhooks in the form of eligibility requirements in the law, employers were able to reduce the ratio of benefits to wages and at the same time reduce unemployment benefit taxes from 2.8 per cent of company payrolls to 1.1 per cent.

The Ford and GM contracts provide that before the supplemental payments can go into effect, they must win clearance in states having at least two-thirds of each firm's workers. Michigan's Attorney General ruled that the payment of state unemployment compensation and supplemental benefits are valid without any change required in the state law. Already a National Association of Manufacturers spokesman has publicly announced that the Attorney General's ruling will be tested in the courts. Since the guaranteed pay plan is contingent on integration with state unemployment compensation, the NAM believes that blocking such integration will be a sure way to torpedo the plan. Speakers at a workshop session sponsored by the NAM urged industrialists to resist the GAW movement in legislative halls, at the bargaining table, and, if necessary, on the strike front.

Why is the NAM so up in arms over the guaranteed pay plan? Five cents per labor hour put in a fund will cost companies less than if the money were paid out as a wage increase. UAW leaders believe that the social troglodytes who braintrust the NAM are blinded by their 19th-century ideology, fearful that a guaranteed wage plan will

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hasten the trend toward "creeping socialism." NAM ideologues fear that, unless blocked, the guaranteed pay plan will expand with each successive collective bargaining contract, with the eventual result that a cartel pattern will evolve in large-scale establishments like Ford and General Motors which have huge capital resources to plan production, allocate markets, manipulate prices to regulate year-round sales, standardize models, stabilize employment twelve months throughout the year—and in the process of doing all this, kill off marginal producers.

With their enormous capital resources, Ford and General Motors can "rationalize" their production in a way which would be unthinkable for independents, who do not have the capital to build one automated plant after another, but must try to find other means to cut labor costs to survive in the competitive struggle. Last year, after examining Studebaker's claim that its higher comparative wage rates placed it at a competitive disadvantage with the Big Three, Studebaker workers in UAW Local 5 voted for a voluntary 14 per cent wage cut and agreed to higher production standards, believing that the concession would save their jobs. But the competitive race in industry grows fiercer as the months go by. In July 1955 Studebaker announced that in its South Bend plant it would continue to build sixty-six cars an hour but with the work force reduced from 10,200 to 8,500. No longer in the mood to accept "company-saving" concessions, the workers answered by an unauthorized strike.

Out-of-line labor costs always have been, and always will be, a pressing problem for the independents. Only time will tell how supplemental unemployment insurance will aggravate this problem. As *Business Week,* June 18, 1955, put it:

> The costs of insuring workers may prove a heavy burden, especially to inefficient companies . . . Increased costs have always been an acid test of management efficiency. Those firms that face failure because of their inefficiency cannot place all the blame on the costs of such things as insured funds. These will expose the weakness of an already weak firm and accelerate its decline, but they will not be the basic cause of failure.

UAW officials scoff at the argument that marginal producers can't afford the guaranteed pay plan, pointing out that a nickel is a nickel whether paid out as a raise or set aside to build up a supplemental pay fund. In the Detroit area seventy tool and die shops came to terms with two UAW locals in a contract which incorporates the guaranteed pay plan on a pool basis. It has since been incorporated into other contracts.

From the way the supplemental pay plan is spreading, it would appear that the NAM not only does not speak for the giants of the auto industry but is not even talking for the small firms when it claims

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American business is violently opposed to the GAW. Looking behind the settlements, one wonders why so much fuss is raised about the supplemental pay plan in relation to small firms. In the long run they, like Ford, may come to feel that they made a good bargain. *Business Week,* June 18, 1955, had this to say:

> Ford people believe they made a good deal because if the GAW issue had never come up they probably would have had to pay considerably more than five cents an hour across the board wage increase. As it turned out, excepting the skilled trades increase and the five cents that was already in the improvement factor, the actual general wage increase ranged from one cent to 3.5 cents an hour.

At UAW meetings, union officials freely admit that the collective bargaining pattern set by Ford negotiations falls far short of what the union demanded, but they stress that the contract was accepted to avert a long and costly strike. "Besides," UAW leaders say, "now that the principle is established, the nickels will come later." They remind union members that the UAW's original pension agreements envisioned a goal of integrated pensions of $200 a month to be reached in ten years from that time, but today, only five years later, the union has already exceeded that goal. Similarly, GAW payments can be raised substantially in the next round of negotiations, UAW leaders say confidently. They assume the present boom, sustained largely by inflated credit, will continue indefinitely. But what will happen to the union's bargaining power if a recession as large or larger than the one in 1954 hits the auto industry three years from now?

III

When contract negotiations reopen in 1958, the UAW will know how much has been paid out of the fund and will be able to compute how much more the companies would have to grant to raise the supplemental pay from 65 per cent to 80 per cent of take-home pay. It might even turn out that so little will have been paid out by 1958 that workers may feel keenly disappointed at the five cents they could have had in wages if the money had not been fixed in a trust fund for three years. This is why some unions are re-examining the guaranteed pay plan.

In a bulletin the AFL Machinists Union frankly tells its staff: "Think twice before proposing or accepting the Ford plan or similar plans." As against the calculations of UAW technicians who estimate the Ford package at twenty cents an hour, the Machinists say that independent observers consider the UAW price tag too high; they value the package at fifteen cents an hour and consider the unemployment plan worth not five cents but one cent. The bulletin does not state

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how these figures are arrived at but clearly indicates that more unions are becoming skeptical over the UAW claims.

A confidential analysis circulated among AFL officials calls the UAW plan a modest beginning toward greater worker protection, but warns Federation affiliates to look twice. "The publicity has blown the plan up out of proportion to its immediate value to most unions and there is a danger that some unions may be led to press for a similar plan before taking full account of its limitations." After explaining that the GAW is hedged with countless restrictive qualifications, the AFL report shows that in industries where wages are considerably lower than in the auto industry, the 60-65 per cent of take-home pay for workers with a family may come to little more than is already provided by unemployment compensation, except in states with very low jobless benefits. But in states like New York, which pays jobless benefits of $36 a week, a worker with three dependents earning $62 a week receives 60 per cent of his take-home pay from the state already.

All in all it appears that the old fashioned wage raise is still more popular with wage earners than some complicated principle that workers feel may or may not pay off in the future. A young auto worker told how he felt about the entire UAW package:

> Most of it hinges on a big IF—IF I get laid off after a year from now I'll draw supplemental pay, IF I get sick I'll draw insurance, IF I work in this place long enough I'll draw pensions. But what happens if they put in automation and I get laid off for good? When my unemployment compensation and supplemental pay checks are used up—then what?

A penetrating observation about the significance of the new kind of collective bargaining pattern for which the UAW is a pace setter was made by a tool and die maker who works at Budd Wheel Co.

> What this new kind of collective bargaining which goes in for fringe benefits, GAW, pensions, etc. adds up to is this: Those workers who have jobs are increasingly supporting workers who don't have jobs. We build up pension funds to help support retired workers. We are told that the GAW will slap a financial cost on the company for not providing steady work but it will come out of the fund built up by our own nickels —we take from Peter to pay Paul.

The same worker observed that with each new contract additional strings bind the worker more firmly to his place of work. "If any time in the future I leave this company, I will not only surrender my seniority but also my rights to supplemental pay based on my seniority."

IV

How shall we evaluate the UAW's guaranteed pay principle? Reuther told reporters that the UAW is charting new avenues and

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is willing to sweat this period out to learn what the experience has to teach. The *New Statesman and Nation* believes that whatever the outcome of the guaranteed pay plan, Reuther can't lose:

> In economic terms, the effect of the Reuther plan is harder to assess. If it could be applied on a large scale, it might become yet another of the stabilizers built into the U. S. economy since 1932; it is an ingenious marriage of Fordism—"the economy of high wages"—and the Keynesian doctrine of deficit spending to maintain demand. But how far can it go? It is feasible for Ford and General Motors because they have been running at full strength and have been making enormous profits, some of which will now be redistributed to their employees. Can other auto firms afford similar increase in labor overhead? Can any other industry, save perhaps steel, aluminum and aircraft? The real importance of Walter Reuther's success is that the precedents he makes are practical propaganda for social objectives, not simply for higher wages. If prosperity continues, the objectives become politically respectable; if the economy sickens then Walter Reuther—who sees himself as a tribune of the people—has already begun to popularize some of the remedies.

Time may prove that the chief merit of the guaranteed pay plan lies in its propaganda value for broader social objectives by making workers feel it is their right to have jobs and security. UAW officials believe that the principle of company responsibility toward laid-off workers won in the two big contracts is likely to seem more valuable to the auto workers if prolonged layoffs occur again. The purpose of the funds is to induce the corporations to plan their schedules so as to assure steadier work, UAW members are told repeatedly. However, one hears much skepticism expressed about this claim since under the new contracts automation may proceed for the next three years while the company has only minor obligations to its workers.

Concerning automation, the Bureau of National Affairs reports that Ford is building up supplemental pay funds at the rate of about $14 million a year. This rate will result in a fund much larger than necessary to provide the stipulated benefits if Ford's layoff experience continues at the same scales as in the past 6 years. Then why did Ford set the supplemental pay fund so high? One possible answer is that the company foresees mounting permanent layoffs as a result of automation. " . . . Ford officials in Detroit and Washington have been reported to view the plan as a 'green light' for automation," BNA states. Could it be that the GAW's use may be geared to the problem of severance pay?

If the magazine *Iron Age* is correct in its prediction that the market for new cars will equal or exceed 1955 sales for the next several years, employment will remain high and the UAW will undoubtedly force the corporations to increase supplemental payments to raise total jobless benefits from 60-65 per cent to 80 per cent of take-home pay. This is all the more likely since, in a booming market, car manufacturers

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can pass on some or all of the increased cost to the consumer by means of higher prices.

Actually the UAW has already negotiated with Allis-Chalmers a supplementary plan which incorporates definite advances over the Ford and GM plans. "Just as we have been able to build in Allis-Chalmers on the agreements negotiated earlier with other companies, we hope and confidently expect that other UAW-CIO units will be able to build on the Allis-Chalmers agreement to provide even greater security for their members," the UAW said.

The Union also confidently expects that since GAW payments are to be integrated with state unemployment compensation, corporations will put the heat on legislatures for higher jobless benefits. Union leaders keep reminding the membership that when industrial pensions were geared to social security, manufacturers put pressure on the government to increase social security allowances. Since higher public unemployment benefits would reduce the supplements paid by corporations, a similar drive will be undertaken to have state benefits raised, the UAW believes.

Although UAW leaders are convinced that more and more positive features of the GAW will unfold in the months and years ahead, the fact remains that the future of the GAW is tied up with the future of the economy in general and of the auto industry in particular.

Should another downswing hit the auto industry, as happened in 1954, touching off a wave of cutbacks, layoffs, and short work weeks, then the kind of labor discontent over the absence of a 40-hour guarantee expressed in the above-quoted *Dodge Main News* story could reach a boiling point, and much of the heat would be directed against the union leadership for events over which they have no control. In such a context the GAW would be overshadowed by new problems, in response to which the union will be forced to struggle for new goals, perhaps a new principle. For contrary to what many people think, the GAW is not a stepping stone to full security, but a milepost in a social struggle that never ends because the ramifications of America's economy are such that with each new round of the class struggle something is almost always gained but nothing is ever solved.

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The article that appears below by G. L. Arnold, the distinguished English political writer, continues the discussion of the problems of Socialism that has been appearing regularly in DISSENT. *Mr. Arnold's essay, which here receives its first American publication, appeared last spring in the* British Journal of Sociology; *an introductory section pertaining to certain inner problems of sociology has been omitted from the present version.*

COLLECTIVISM RECONSIDERED

G. L. Arnold

I

When one glances through the writings of our modern, hard-headed, non-utopian sociologists—students of industrial organization, of "labor relations," of the corporation and its managerial structure—one notices a strain of controlled optimism in their otherwise businesslike and down-to-earth findings. Much as they would disclaim all sympathy with syndicalist notions or other forms of social romanticism, they are far from hopeless about the human pattern disclosed by large-scale organization. If the outlook is none too good for those at the bottom of the ladder, there are compensations in the offing for the higher and middle grades of the hierarchy: not merely Burnham's "managers,"* but the entire group of administrators, consultants, scientists, technologists, engineers, and skilled workers—what might perhaps be termed the technological stratum. It is not simply that this group is growing in numbers, in social importance, and perhaps in the collective influence it exerts on industrial policy—there is also the emergence of a novel form of "industrial democracy" within this

* Professor G. D. H. Cole, in a suggestive paper published in the December, 1950 issue of the *British Journal of Sociology*, stresses the vagueness and ambiguity of Burnham's terminology, his tendency to shift from political to economic categories and vice versa, his failure to differentiate between those in control of the industrial set-up and the technologists who merely service it, etc. Certainly a writer who in 1941 predicted that the whole world, America included, would rapidly go fascist, encourages a certain wariness on the part of readers. But I think Burnham may be credited with having asked the right question, though he probably gave the wrong answer. And at any rate he has helped to bring sociology down into the political arena—where it belongs!

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particular corporate body, a democracy based on technical competence; and because of it one may witness the growth of an *esprit de corps* which causes people in this group to hold together, as professionals usually do, against those outside their own order. Some of the most enthusiastic descriptions of modern large-scale industry have been done by people who claim for "the corporation" those virtues of intelligent social co-operation, voluntary discipline, intelligent planning, scientific training etc., which are in fact aspects of any large-scale organization whose work is rationally planned. In so far as such tributes are deserved they reflect the impact of scientific training on the way in which things are managed under conditions where both the administrator at the top, and the foreman near the bottom of the ladder, must know something about the technology of production. Technical education of workers, and scientific training of managers, are aspects of the same process of what the Germans call *Verwissenschaftlichung;* so, too, is the growing importance of teamwork and, at the higher levels, of what is vaguely known as planning. All this of course implies an ethos very different from that of the old-fashioned entrepreneur, who was in the habit of extemporizing means and ends simultaneously and who seldom troubled his head about the connection between them. To "proceed according to plan" is to assume the overriding importance of a general idea—in other words, of a collective idea. It is just because of this that individualism of the traditional sort goes by the board. But its place is not, or not necessarily, taken by bureaucratic routine—not even under a totalitarian regime which tries to stifle initiative in every field save the one in which it remains dependent on the maximum energizing of human activity: that of production. Rather it may be, and often is, succeeded by forms of co-operation which leave considerable scope to personal and team initiative. It depends on who is planning and for what. If the ethos developed in this form of process is radically different from that of the old free-wheeling entrepreneur, it is not necessarily inferior to it in point of willingness to assume responsibility. "Serfdom" would seem to be incompatible with anything as dynamic as modern technology; whether the system is run on capitalist, socialist, or "managerial" lines, the built-in economic pressures must find their equivalent at some level in a type of organization which gives scope to the personality of the organizer.

SUCH CHANGES IN THE PREVAILING PATTERN are not confined to industry. They can be traced in, for example, the military field, where science has for decades marched hand in hand with the emergence of the small highly trained combat team—or guerrilla group! Recent wars and para-military struggles have been distinguished by revolutionary innovations in this field rather than by stale routine. The

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trenches of the first world war marked a pause between two techniques; since then the stalemate has been broken and the outcome has been to restore the importance of both the individual and the small group. One hears a great deal about push-button warfare, but what seems to be happening in fact is rather that small teams of specialists, and somewhat larger groups of technicians, are developing forms of activity denied to the old foot-slogging infantry. In the 1939-45 war, mass armies were already at a disadvantage unless broken up into small units which could develop initiative. The Germans were first in this field and owed much of their early success to this fact. The lesson has now been assimilated by all modern armies, and where they are still reluctant to learn it, it is being drummed into them by the successes of guerrilla warfare. Oddly enough, it is in the age of the thermo-nuclear bomb that the home-made weapon has come into its own again. Partisans waylay the armored column; the hand grenade proves effective in fighting the tank. At the very moment when its demise was proclaimed by the totalitarians, democracy thrust its shaggy head through the window and dropped a submachine gun on the floor.

At the "managerial" level, so to speak, the process takes a different form, as befits the distinction between those who plan and those who merely co-operate. But it is not a form which lends support to the pessimists who see only the growth of bureaucracy in an increasingly hierarchical order. The same world conflict which gave rise to the resistance movement and the partisan swarm also saw the emergence of the armored spearhead racing far ahead of the infantry, the air armada flying in formation over the battlefield: at both ends of the scale the specialist breaks loose from the inert fabric geared to an outmoded technology. The armored division resembles the mechanized plant—a complex organization with hundreds of vehicles and a big repair-and-maintenance problem; clearly a job for the expert, who in turn might reasonably think that he should be called in to advise on general strategy. Where this was not done—as in the France of 1940, or the Germany of 1945—disaster resulted. De Gaulle's career epitomizes the possibilities of the new order. Half his appeal lay in his ideas on scientific warfare, rather than in his old-fashioned patriotism or his unbending refusal to concede defeat. The general who was also a technical expert turned out to be the central figure of his country's crisis; below him the military and professional hierarchy included hundreds of his type who later rallied to him, and these military reformers were helped and joined by modern-minded technicians and their political friends. Together they explored the possibilities of a new ethos. Means of destruction, like means of production, can become so closely patterned that the same individual intelligence is able to supervise their technical functioning and to direct their operational use: the tank com-

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mander, like the factory manager, is both a technical expert and a leader of men. Hence a certain penchant for élite doctrines which in turn serve to frighten the more conventional democratic spokesmen. In the 1930s de Gaulle encountered resistance both from the conservative leaders of the military hierarchy and from the majority of political figures, some of whom scented authoritarian tendencies behind his scheme for the creation of a highly trained *corps d'élite*. Léon Blum (who later changed his mind on this subject) cried out against the establishment of a "pretorian guard." Such fears unfortunately contributed to the destruction of the Third Republic, whose leaders had identified democracy with egalitarianism. The Fourth Republic, no less democratic than its predecessor, has overcome its fear of mechanized divisions and seems none the worse for it.

IT MAY BE ASKED HOW THIS PATTERN fits the accepted image of a social order in which the producers collectively own their tools, or at least exercise some control over their use. Does it amount to more than an extension of privilege for the upper layers of the new technological hierarchy, civilian or military? In the first place, even the introduction of a limited form of collective responsibility at some level would be a net gain. Secondly, it has never been pretended that democratic control can operate at every level upon the totality of the system. It is enough, for a start, if those in charge of their particular sector take an intelligent interest in its operation, and are given the right to do so. If every one of the "professional hierarchies" were so organized as to encourage autonomy, self-government, decentralization of authority—this would seem to be the sane and healthy core of the "corporatist" idea travestied under regimes which never seriously meant to apply it—a great deal of the present outcry against centralized planning would come to an end; so would phenomena such as the commercialization of the press and the other media of mass communication. Why indeed should newspapers and radio stations not be controlled by those who work on them? "Workers' control" might usefully start in places where there exists no social prejudice against people who are "merely" workers. In fact, however, there is scarcely a large-scale organization where a start could not be made if those in control were not in principle opposed to it. Even under the 1954-51 Labor Government in Britain, resistance to the idea of "workers' control" in the mines (where it would, according to some experts, have been feasible) came from those who had in advance made up their minds against it. They have had their reward in the form of disappointing coal output. Nationalization having been planned on purely bureaucratic lines, its relative failure in terms of output and of social relations was then blamed on labor, or on the socialist concept. But the only place where

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socialism and the workers could come together was precisely the place where it was determined they should not meet: on the factory floor or at the pithead. Giving real authority to production committees would have meant strengthening shop stewards as against union organizers who had no intention of furthering such experiments. So the issue was drowned in a flood of talk about "joint consultation." It may well be that the Labor Government missed a major opportunity in this field.*

Any future advance will probably have to start from a concept of technical education which envisages it not simply as a means of improving efficiency, but as a link between the worker and the planner. Pushed far enough, such education, if it cannot altogether eliminate the distinction between mental and physical labor, can at least set up its own hierarchy in the workshop, turn the worker into an amateur technologist, the soldier into a potential N.C.O., and thus overcome the modern "alienation" which undermines efficiency no less than welfare. What the totalitarian regimes have attempted along these lines is just successful enough to give our own society the necessary push. If Stakhanovism can score some degree of success under conditions where labor is deprived of its bargaining power, the reason is surely that, for all its systematic distortion in the interest of maximum output and the deliberate creation of new group privileges, it has tapped some hidden source of willingness to participate. For the worker indeed technology holds the most direct access to science and everything that lies beyond it. But technical education without responsible participation soon loses its spur or degenerates into yet another aspect of "public relations in industry." For collectivists, its significance on the contrary lies in the fact that it arises spontaneously out of the modern process of work, while at the same time it enables the worker to develop his individuality.

II

Such ideas are, or should be, in accordance with the traditional aims of the labor movement, in so far as that movement is responsive to socialist tendencies; for socialism is the point where the

* Cf. Professor Cole's proposals (in *Is This Socialism?*, New Statesman pamphlet, London, 1954) for introducing worker's control at the factory level: "This I believe to be entirely practicable, provided that the policy receives the full backing of a sympathetic Labor Government—but not otherwise. What it involves is that the Trade Unions shall . . . transfer to the workers, under Trade Union supervision, certain of the functions of workshop discipline and organization that are at present in the hands of foremen and supervisors appointed by the employers to order the workers about." In this context it is of course immaterial whether the employers are private owners or bureaucratic state boards. The London dock strike of October, 1954, which involved an issue of labor discipline, will perhaps in retrospect appear as the first major conflict that turned on the worker's status rather than his income. From this standpoint the various personal and political factors which served to inflame this particular dispute appear secondary and not especially interesting.

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innate collectivism of the workers' movement encounters the drive for more responsible participation in the process of production. The original aim of organization no doubt is simply the need for collective bargaining; at this level the workers experience the claim of solidarity, which becomes *the* distinctive touchstone of labor organization, and the central concept around which the consciousness of the worker takes shape. "Solidarity" is for him what "honor" was for the feudal order, and "honesty" for the bourgeois: a claim which is felt as absolute because the existence of the individual depends on it. The energizing power of such ideals, and their loss of attraction when confronted with alternative ways of life, makes up three-quarters of the real—as distinct from the official—history of social organization. Implicit in each is an exclusiveness which is both the strength and the limitation of the organism they sustain: since the claim is absolute, the practical consequences which flow from it cannot readily be abridged for the sake of convenience. Thus "loyalty," in its blindness, may become an obstacle to the attainment of aims to which the workers themselves are committed, since leaders who rise from the ranks tend to lose the confidence of their erstwhile followers. The labor movement, especially at the trade union level, is desperately egalitarian. Its ethos is so entirely centered upon "all for one, one for all" that it cannot adapt itself to forms of process in which the hierarchy of skills automatically confers social status. Nor should it be expected or urged to do so. Just because we are moving into an increasingly planned and hierarchical society, the primitive democracy of organized labor becomes the chief safeguard against authoritarian and, ultimately, despotic tendencies. Under Stalinist-Fascist rule, where this democracy has been smashed, the safeguard is lost and we confront the spectre of "1984." Yet the unions are potentially an obstacle not merely to totalitarianism, but to forms of planning compatible with democratic control. At all times and in all societies, trade unions have stood for less work, more pay, more leisure, the minimum of rationalization compatible with job security, and a rate of advance geared to that of the slowest and weakest member of the team. To reproach them with this would be absurd: the placing of a brake upon mere efficiency is their *raison d'être*. Unions exist to protect the worker not only against market fluctuations and loss of earnings, but equally against the pressure of mechanization. This has not prevented some trade union movements, e.g. in the United States, from taking part in rationalizing the production process; but it is only where autonomous labor organizations have been replaced by state-controlled ones that organized resistance to the drive for maximum output has disappeared. Here, though the workers may protect themselves by ca'canny, they can no longer utilize the unions to slow down the rate of technical progress, which thus tends to be high.

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Moreover, they cannot effectively oppose any collective slogan to a regime which is itself collectivist in appearance and to some extent in intention.

It is only under conditions of political freedom that the tension between labor's prime aims and their socialist derivatives has a chance of working itself out. Here its solution—never completely realized—depends on labor's acceptance of the goal of a freely planned society with a high and rising standard of productive performance. The unions, which necessarily stand in the center of this difficult process of reorientation from one level of awareness to another, cannot help facing both ways. They must continue to protect their members and yet assist the whole community to realize its aims. This is true even of the typical "mixed economy" of our age, let alone of the planned society which remains the only possible goal of democratic socialism. It is clearly not true of the centralized state-controlled economy of totalitarianism: there the conflict has been violently resolved in favor of one of its elements. The ruling political party, itself amalgamating ever more profoundly with the socially dominant stratum, sees to it that exploitation reaches the maximum rate compatible with efficiency. In a sense this is the most rational social order conceivable. It is nonetheless unstable, its internal contradictions showing in the constant need to reinforce the apparatus of repression, and in the gradual emergence of a breach between the planners and the planned. Yet it maintains itself, albeit dictatorially, as long as it has the support of the new social key stratum: the technical intelligentsia. One should not conclude that the ruling party functions as an "organ" of the new directing class, except in a vague and metaphorical sense. The point is that the interests of the party and of the privileged stratum coincide, at any rate in the area where emphasis is placed by both on the aim of maximum productivity. If the technical intelligentsia in a sense is hoist with its own petard—since it is tied to the regime by the latter's unshakable allegiance to planning for higher production—the Communists themselves are held to their task by the need to interpenetrate ever more profoundly with the key stratum. Without the latter's active support they cannot govern, far less meet the competition of political rivals whose own economy is still dynamic enough even by totalitarian standards.

Thus the political issue of our day is joined in the one field where technical progress confers ever greater power and responsibility upon the upper layer of the new social hierarchy. No wonder every Communist movement (starting from the Russian party since the period of the great purges in the thirties) has increasingly transformed itself into an organization (not, however, an "organ") of the new élite. The Stalinist drive for maximum industrialization and maximum output

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has its own logic, even its own dialectic: if it subjects the entire society, including its top stratum, to the tyrannical rule of the planners and the secret police, it also compels the Communists to dispense with working-class support and to transform their own ideology into a crude technocratic vision of endless material advance at the expense of all human and social considerations: a veritable caricature of the standard Victorian confession of faith in a mid-nineteenth century milieu such as the Manchester whose inhuman concentration on money-spinning so horrified the youthful Engels. Once this transformation has occurred it is not open to the Communist party to revert to its original role as a representative of working-class aims. It cannot do so without sacrificing the goals it sets for the new directing stratum; for although the workers—or some of them—may incidentally benefit from the headlong drive for greater output, the central energizing concept is no longer democratic but frankly authoritarian and hierarchical: Stalinism recognizes the key role of the technical intelligentsia in the planned society it is building, and it assigns to the party the difficult task of mediating between the directing stratum and the masses. To do this the party must satisfy two apparently contradictory requirements: its power must be absolute, but it must also respond to the major needs of the technocratic stratum. This, however, is the problem of every absolutism. Insoluble in theory—hence the theorists of absolutism are either blind to its function or deliberately dishonest—it is by no means so in the day-to-day business of overcoming its own contradictions by storing up fresh unsolved problems for the future. Under totalitarian rule this process takes the form of periodic "purges." The purge indeed is the mechanism whereby the party from time to time restores the balance between the conflicting pressures laid upon it by its dual role of absolutist ruler of society and technocratic organizer in the interest of the new directing stratum. There is pressure at both ends of the mechanism, for *raisons d'état* may require measures unpalatable to all groups and it takes an absolute ruler to mediate such conflicts, once the democratic mechanism has been abolished. The party leaders must therefore be treated as infallible—though by a familiar paradox it is precisely these infallible leaders who from time to time are "unmasked" as saboteurs.

No examination of this kind can afford to overlook the political developments of recent years which have brought this type of monolithic organization into being. The Communist party is what it is, and it functions in the way it does, because its leaders have once and for all made up their minds that a total reorganization of society is possible and necessary, and that it must be achieved by force, from above. Similar aims were of course inherent in the various fascist move-

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ments, and to the extent that the latter have been superseded by the Stalinist drive it can be said that modern Communism is post-fascist—not in the superficial sense that it has taken the place of a now defunct threat to democracy, but in the more important one that it has inherited and absorbed the ensemble of fascist organization and ideology. The fact itself is familiar to students of European politics, but its sociological significance is veiled by Communist silence on the key issue.

In a sense the Communist theorists have been keeping silent about it ever since the German debacle of 1933 which disclosed the fundamental miscalculation of utopian Leninist Communism. That miscalculation was the belief in the existence—in industrial countries such as Germany—of a "revolutionary proletariat" with a spontaneous capacity for political organization, even under a hostile totalitarian dictatorship. It was the collapse of working-class resistance to Hitler in 1933, and the almost total passivity of labor during the twelve years that followed, which cured the Comintern of its error. Many factors no doubt went into that experience: the destruction of the traditional working-class parties and organizations, with the resulting loss of leadership; the Nazi regime's success in banishing unemployment, though at the price of war preparations, etc. The great fact remains that for twelve years labor did not stir, while the dictatorship maintained itself, thanks to the more or less whole-hearted support of just that key stratum which was simultaneously beginning to emerge in the USSR: the technical intelligentsia. It took some time until the lesson had sunk in, but by 1945 it had been learned: Communism must cease to be "proletarian." In the language of overt political discussion this discovery was translated into the harmless formula that the party must "learn to address itself to all groups." The real significance of the change was more profound: the Communist leadership had at last understood that to the Stalinist "revolution from above" there corresponds a social stratum which organizes the planned society from the top downward—the technological intelligentsia. If Hitler, with his adventurist mentality and program, could govern in this fashion, why not the Communist party? In this sense 1933 has become the watershed between the old and the new doctrine of revolution—between "Communism, utopian and scientific," to paraphrase Engels. "Revolution" no longer signifies "liberation of the toilers," but "all power to the planners." In Marxian terms this signifies a change in the class structure of the party. Unquestionably the leaders are aware of it. Hence the peculiar moral climate of modern Communism, with its double standard of truth for the elect, its contempt for "the masses," and its elevation of the individual conscience to public enemy number one.

Phenomena of this kind are, it seems to me, of equal concern to

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the sociologist and to the political scientist. They indicate the domain where both disciplines may be expected in future to overlap. In particular it seems important at the present time to stress the role of the technical intelligentsia under totalitarianism, since it has latterly become the fashion to analyze revolutionary movements—whether in Tsarist Russia or contemporary India—in terms of intelligentsia politics. Such attempts to introduce scientific concepts into political discussion represent an important advance—on condition that the social context is kept in sight. An effort to define *all* revolutionary movements as expressions of hostility to the *status quo* on the part of intellectuals may give employment to numerous historians—some have already gone to work, from this point of view, on the history of the French Revolution—but it does not significantly advance our understanding of the current situation. The modern totalitarian regimes must be viewed in the context of a rapidly changing industrial society, in which the growing importance of planning translates itself into the emergence of a hierarchy centered upon certain key groups. It is not the intelligentsia in general that forms the core of the Soviet regime, but the technical intelligentsia in particular. We shall never get anywhere in political science if such distinctions are not given due weight.* We shall equally, it may be suggested, make little progress if we abstract from the reality of class conflict. Every totalitarian regime in one sense represents an attempt to do away with the class struggle. Though the monolithic community is an illusion, the monolithic party is real enough, and what keeps it in being is the attempt to substitute the state for society: to make the government, that is to say, the final arbiter of all social conflicts. Historically, the attempt to impose such a system grows out of the experience of political breakdown under conditions where the various pressure groups of a fully developed mass democracy are deadlocked, and the state consequently ceases to function. That was true of the situation which brought Mussolini and Hitler to power, and in principle this particular experience could be repeated in any modern democracy with fully developed sectional and class organizations which function as pressure groups. It is a truism that political parties—and, at a higher level, the state—exist for the purpose of arbitrating such sectional conflicts. The distinctive feature of modern monolithic "state parties" is that they amalgamate the functions of

* A suggestion which leads to the further remark that, for all the cultural resemblances to mid-Victorian society which appear so striking to the student of Soviet affairs, one cannot speak of a "middle-class" or "bourgeoisie" in the USSR, unless such terms are to be completely emptied of meaning. The strains within the dictatorship (between the party leaders, the bureaucracy of planners, the technical intelligentsia, and the masses) constitute a pattern utterly different from that of Western democratic politics. The term "bourgeoisie" in any case has long been used to designate the property-owning minority of the old "middle class," and should not be employed by historians to fill the gaps in their own conceptual apparatus.

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the party with those of the state: the former becomes all-embracing and compulsory, while the latter is politicalized to the last degree. Under fascism the official justification for this state of affairs can occasionally be reduced to variations on the theme "the King's government must be carried on," but the underlying reality is that the state has been captured by one particular political organization with a program for arbitrating all social differences. Fascist theory identifies society with the state, and since the latter is *per definitionem* "above" class and sectional struggles, these are viewed as hostile to the real interests of society. In modern Communist doctrine, on the other hand, the state-party regime may appear variously as an expression of "true" democracy, or as the political form of the "dictatorship of the proletariat"; but at any rate Communist theorists are in no doubt that it is incompatible with the sectional push and pull which is the lifeblood of our modern pluralist democracies.

We have here another instance of the peculiar dialectical relationship between fascist and Communist movements, and of their tendency to copy each other. It would be unrealistic, however, to overlook the common social factor: both movements ultimately compete for the support of the technical intelligentsia, and their real faith is technocratic, i.e. indifferent to property relations in industry. Communists and fascists can both argue that they are concerned with the overriding interests of the community, and they can do so because from the technocratic standpoint it is a matter of indifference whether the means of production are "owned" by private capitalists or by the state, provided they are "run" by the new directing stratum and the workers are kept well in hand and forbidden to strike. In this sense, and in this sense only, fascism and Stalinism are ideologies of the new class, which, like every new class, identifies itself with "the state," i.e. the public good. It is only a step from here to the apparently paradoxical phenomenon of Communist regimes engaging in forcibly suppressing the class struggle and even banishing it from Marxist-Leninist-Stalinist theory. True, the proximate cause of this drive to establish conformity is the need to erect an unchallengeable center of authority which shall mediate all sectional conflicts and, if necessary, repress them by force. But the ideology which subserves this purpose would be ineffective if it did not echo the demand of the social key stratum for a "strong" authority with power to plan, and its indifference to the conflicting claims of the major classes. The new absolutism, like its predecessor, answers a social need other than the traditional urge of the state bureaucracy to establish conformity and suppress opposition. The more "rational" and "scientific" its ideology, the better its chance to absorb the technological stratum, but the latter's rationality comes to a decided halt before the phenomenon of class. Its own position in the new society is not yet

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sufficiently assured to permit that degree of objectivity towards social processes which the bourgeoisie achieved a long time ago. Hence the significant hostility of radical "New Dealers" and other representatives of the technocratic stratum to Marxian concepts which at first sight seem quite innocuous from the standpoint, say, of an administrator or technician with strong leanings in the direction of planning.* The notion that society groups itself into classes with significant social aims inevitably entails the thought that the intelligentsia must at some stage define its relationship to the working class which, in a planned economy, it will have to direct. Such thoughts are disturbing—and not only to "sleek-headed men, and such as sleep o' nights." They point to the necessity of a socialist doctrine which will ultimately make sense to planners and planned alike. Far better to concentrate on problems of "social engineering" which by-pass the political issue.

For in the end the sociology of politics comes down to the simple question of who makes the relevant decisions, and in what form. Questions of this kind can never be wholly freed from the odium that attaches to politics. They touch too nearly upon the issue of power, and upon the function of those whose business it is to instruct the public, but who more frequently are engaged in misleading both themselves and others. There is indeed no single simple conceptual apparatus which will enable us to sort out valid theories from spurious ones; but there are attitudes favorable to realism in sociology, just as there are others which make for aridity or "double-think." There is today great need for an analysis of the technocratic trend and its political implications, and it may be thought that such an analysis might come equally well from those who on the whole welcome this trend as from those who see only its dangers; but it will not come if sociologists shut themselves off from the political scene. What we need are not more learned disquisitions upon this or that aspect of Marx's or Max Weber's theories, but an attempt in the spirit of Marx and Weber to enter the new world of hierarchical organization, centralized planning, and monolithic political structures, of which the Communist regimes so far are the most extreme expression. In all probability we shall then find that the problems exhibited by the new absolutism are not totally irrelevant to our own society.

* Similar tendencies have long been noticeable in the socialist movement: *vide* the longstanding refusal of the Webbs to accept the Marxian analysis of class. Characteristically, this reluctance disappeared when the Webbs had at last discovered a nominally socialist dictatorship with which, on account of its technocratic character and its successful emancipation from "proletarian" tendencies, they could identify themselves.

NOTE: The foregoing is based on a paper read on November 2, 1954, at a meeting of the sociology faculty club in the London School of Economics and Political Science, with Professor Morris Ginsberg in the chair. The subsequent discussion turned largely on the question of workers' control in industry, and I have therefore thought it right to incorporate some observations which arose in its course.

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COUCH LIBERALISM AND THE GUILTY PAST

Harold Rosenberg

I

What is remarkable about the manufacture of myths in the twentieth century is that it takes place under the noses of living witnesses of the actual events and, in fact, cannot dispense with their collaboration.

Everyone is familiar with the Communist method of transforming the past; the formula for the production of historical fictions is no longer any more secret than for the atom bomb. Through a series of public confessions a new collective Character is created, retrospectively responsible for the way things happened. The Trotskyite Assassin or the Titoist Agent Of Imperialism who emerges from the judicial vaudeville changes events after they have taken place. But to accomplish this, former builders of the future must agree to destroy their personal pasts in order to substitute the one offered them by the political police. At their trials, the condemned Communists are still making history—only this time backwards.

In the United States, too, recent history is being re-made. If Russia has purloined our nuclear know-how, we have evened the score by mastering her technique of psychological fission and fusion. To be able to dissolve segments of time is at least as important in modern politico-military struggle as the capacity to devastate areas of space. It is now definitely in our power to alter at will the contents of the past twenty years.

Since under our free system the government undertakes enterprises only when private initiatives fail, our official investment in mythology has so far been a limited one. Save for occasional contributions by Congress and the Attorney General's office, most of the work of changing American history has been carried on by volunteers; although various Republican Party leaders have indicated their bafflement at their Administration's refusal to use to the hilt a weapon which has been proved so effective. A single full-scale blast and the years 1932-1952 could have been turned into the desert of "twenty years of treason."

Modern history-changing needs the help of persons prepared to make a gift of their own pasts to the new one under construction. Confession is a species of autobiography; but in the political confession the "I" of the confessor is not the genuine interest of either the accused or his prosecutor. The photo of the final verdict is not of a collection of

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individuals but of a single "we." The Enemy is *one*—the effect of a composite of self-accusations, each of which, through fitting into the rest, exceeds the specific guilt assumed by the accused.

The reason for this overlapping was made clear by Radek in his last plea, after indicating in his testimony that he was the Fermi of psyche splitting. "There are in the country," he explained, "semi-Trotskyites, one-eighth Trotskyites and . . . people who from liberalism . . . gave us help." The guilty "we" being fashioned at his trial had to cover all of these. Vishinsky's counter-revolutionary Mad Dog had to resemble equally the desperado with the bomb, the ideologically skeptical professor, the gossipy and all-but-innocent clerk. A problem of intersecting planes and contrasting hues and light values. In the end, the Adversary had to have the face of almost anybody.

Precisely in these wider radiations of his guilt lies the reward of the confessor. An act at once individual and collective, his confession, besides giving effective vent to his resentment against those both less and more guilty than he, becomes the means by which he rejoins society. His opposition to the regime, no matter if it consisted only of an occasional doubt, isolated him through having the tonality of his individual conscience; especially if he was *not* part of an organized conspiracy his hidden criticism burdened him with the full weight of subversion. To whom could he communicate its exact nuance? Did not his friends, his wife, his children, exist in the façade of common agreement? His arrest had been but the physical confirmation of his removal from society.

In being forced to accuse himself the distracted dissident is given a chance for uniformity. Models of guilt are placed before him; he is invited to make full use of them in portraying himself. His confession will not only bestow upon him solidarity with other confessing culprits, it will supply him with a community definition. Out of the solitude of his dungeon he marches in an ensemble of comrades into the full tableau of pre-fabricated history. That the scene is a hoax matters less than that he is no longer alone and has a role to play.

In America the part of the repentant history maker has been played by the ex-radical intellectuals, some, former Communists, others, liberals and rebels who could no longer find any substance but anti-Communism in their earlier dissent. Which category they had belonged to made little difference once the confessions began. In accordance with the recipe for recasting history, all threw themselves into the same melting pot, were changed into the same Person and assumed the identical guilt. Looking backwards, paying dues to the Party or following its line were only deeper shadings of criticizing capitalism, questioning the motives of certain of America's foreign policies or making distinctions between Red and White totalitarianism.

II

Though confessing in America lacked the fatal finale of Iron Curtain confessions, it was not without its difficulties. The very absence

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of the bludgeon created special problems. It is possible that without the inspiration of the Russian originals, as an earlier generation was inspired by the Moscow Art Theatre, the entire effort would have failed. Far from being goaded to their parts by police agents hidden in the wings, the American guilty had to all but force their way on to the stage. Chambers himself, that witness of witnesses (one almost slips into calling him The Supreme Witness), came close to breaking under the ordeal of gaining the notice of people whose vital interests he was determined to defend. In time, we know, the barriers went down and whoever had a story to tell found a campfire waiting.

Still, the fact that one had possessed a radical bent did not of itself make him the star of a Congressional hearing nor supply him with a list of interesting names. Some leading confessors have probably never even been interviewed by the FBI. When the appetite of the ex-radicals for at least a spear-carrying assignment exceeded their stock of misdeeds, they were compelled to draw upon a psychological reserve of guilt, the confession of dangerous frames of mind to which "we the intellectuals" are prone—what had been called in totalitarian courts *moral responsibility* for sabotage or assassination performed by strangers. Obviously, the exposure of such data was as urgently needed as of dates and places when packages of film were passed. How else than through "our" instruction could a cop or a congressman understand and guard against the obscure mental processes of an Oppenheimer? Yet the sales resistance of the dumb outsiders to these more refined services could never be quite overcome.

Since there was no one effectively to extract confessions—even the threats of McCarthy fell far short of propelling the ultimate self-doubt that was the specialty of Russian interrogation—the potential confessor had to supply his own heckling. In the United States psychoanalysis assumed the function of the secret police. If Americans spoke in order to escape from a dungeon, it was from the dungeons of their own selves. Yet hasn't the Russian prosecutor since *Crime and Punishment* been rather easily recognizable as the personification of an inner voice? Despite the handicap of the Bill of Rights, our fugitve radicals succeeded admirably in making themselves victims; their example of Do-It-Yourself initiative ought to convince Khrushchev that prisons and torture are obsolete and that the cellars of the Lubianka may as well be re-fitted as a game room.

The final result was that a neo-liberal became available to admit the justice of any accusation, no matter how ridiculous. Since Oppenheimer gave money to aid the Spanish Loyalists, it mattered not that at the height of Russian-American cooperation he unequivocally rejected the approaches of Communist agents; "we," including Oppenheimer, may as well own up that we are unreliable types and deserve to be fired, regardless of actual service to the country. When McCarthy attempted to bully James Wechsler and spread his invented history into the headlines, the confessing liberal showed his objectivity by conceding that "we" never tendered names to the FBI unless we were forced

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to and are, consequently, "McCarthyites of the Left," in fighting distortion with distortion. Guilty ex-radicalism has even evolved out of its Freudian researches a new GUILT BY RHETORIC, consisting of a contaminating passion for certain words and phrases. "How desperately," exclaims a characteristic document, "they [the guilty liberals] wish in each case that the Hiss, the Lattimore *who speaks their language* might be telling the truth." The important step here beyond mere Guilt By Association is that to be incriminated it is no longer necessary to know Hiss or Lattimore personally.*

THE QUOTATION ABOVE regarding complicity through language with persons with whom we may violently disagree is from Leslie Fiedler's *An End to Innocence,* a collection of "essays on culture and politics," recently published by Beacon Press. This book is as representative of what I hereby christen Couch Liberalism as anything one may hope to find. Most of the pieces in it have appeared during the past five years in the leading organs of this sect: *Commentary, Encounter, Partisan Review;* and its meditations on the evils "we" have wrought are headed by a passage from that St. John of the Couch, Whittaker Chambers, to the effect that History will get you if you don't get it first.

Half of Fiedler's book is devoted to an essay apiece on the Hiss Case, the Rosenberg Case and McCarthy, in each of which it turns out that whoever suffered deserved what he got for not confessing and that we intellectuals with our "shorthand" that the people cannot understand are deeply implicated; the rest of the book consists of literary essays with a strong discovery-of-the-true-America motif.

When I first read some of these political articles, together with pieces like them by other writers, I must confess (it's contagious) that I did not grasp what was happening. These slippery arguments that directed themselves against persons who had already been punished by law, that complained about "our" over-fussiness on the subject of civil rights, that while believing McCarthy was a crook placed under suspicion those who called him one, seemed to me simply odd. I could not grasp especially why these messages appeared under the name of liberalism. I, too, believed that Hiss was guilty, but so had the jury, he was in jail—so why these profound evocations of his perfidy and of Chambers's ordeal and triumph by a "liberal?" Or why a "liberal" indictment of Lattimore to supplement that of the Attorney General's office? Or an assault on people who, conceding the guilt of the Rosenbergs, opposed their electrocution? It was only after I had noticed that these ideas were appearing in concert that I recognized that a collective person was in the process of formation which named itself "liberal"

* Guilt By Rhetoric was introduced recently by the U.S. Army in a pamphlet on how to detect subversives through their habitual use of key words like "struggle" or "imperialism." *The New York Times* protested in an editorial and the next day announced that the booklet had been withdrawn. Undoubtedly, among the very high brows to whom we owe this attempted contribution to the defense of freedom, the *Times* is regarded as still suffering from liberal illusions.

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out of the same default of historical truth that caused the Communist sympathizers to cling to this title.

Fiedler's essays blend the new fake-liberal anti-Communist with that of the old fake-liberal fellow traveler to produce a "liberal" who shares the guilt for Stalin's crimes through the fact alone of having held liberal or radical opinions, *even anti-Communist ones!* For Fiedler *all* liberals are contaminated by the past, if by nothing else than through having spoken the code language of intellectuals.

Fertilized by left-wing sophistication and by Freud, Fiedler's essays are confessions on another plane than autobiography. He has no facts to relate—one does not learn that he ever did anything in politics. The guilt he assumes is that of an essence; he confesses for the guilty "we" without an "I." His theorizing about American politics derives from a vision of wrestling stereotypes, Right and Left wing, in which the collective Left sinks under a bad conscience. As one of our new volunteer cultural ambassadors "explaining us" to the Europeans, Fiedler must have done as much as anyone to confirm the belief that everybody in America lives on a billboard.

III

An End to Innocence adds perhaps the final dimension to penitence. Fiedler's line is: We have been guilty of being innocent. Only by confessing will we terminate our culpability. In a rhetoric in which the kettles predominate, Fiedler laments Alger Hiss's refusal to confess as a defeat for all of "us." Hiss "failed all liberals, all who had, in some sense and at some time shared his illusions (and who that calls himself a liberal is exempt?), all who demanded of him that he speak aloud a common recognition of complicity. And yet . . . at the bottom of their hearts, they did not finally want him to admit anything, but preferred the chance he gave them to say: He is, we are, innocent." Hiss's drama of Hush Or Tell could have cleansed us all had but its protagonist acknowledged his "mistake."

Whom Fiedler is here describing, except possibly repentant Communists who haven't confessed yet, I defy anyone to specify. His "all liberals" is a made-up character with an attributed past. To his question "Who is exempt?" I raise my right hand and reply that I never shared anything with Mr. Hiss, including automobiles or apartments; certainly not illusions, if my impression is correct that he was a typical government Communist or top-echelon fellow traveler. I shall have a few words to say about these "innocents" later. Here I insist that it was Chambers who shared with Hiss, not "all liberals"; Chambers who was never a liberal, who in his book gives no hint of having ever criticized the Communist Party in his radical days from a libertarian position and who after he broke with Communism become something quite different from a liberal. Fiedler's "common recognition of complicity" is simply slander, ex-Communist style. Had Hiss testified according to his suggestion he would have deserved another five years.

Perhaps from the point of view of the Department of Justice or

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of Couch Liberalism Hiss made a "mistake" by not confessing as Chambers did. But from the point of view of liberals and independent radicals the activities of the Chambers-Hisses when they were Communists were never "mistakes." Communists on this level belonged to the Party's apparatus of intimidation and bribery. Their respectability did not conflict with their support of Communist treachery and violence against non-Party Leftists or radical democrats throughout the world. On the contrary, boycotting, informing against or condemning to the executioner socialists, anarchists, Trotskyites, POUMists, strengthened their patriotic disguise. Nor did confession ever purge these agents of power of their passion to browbeat critics of their historical mission. The same people who as Communists persecuted free opinion continued to do so with the same vehemence after they had turned themselves inside out and become organizers of anti-radical penance. Conversion alters the world in which a man acts; it does not change his character. Before he confessed the GPU chief Yagoda executed countless dissenters; by his confession he dragged down unnumbered others. The first law of the spurious "we" is its malice.

How could we intellectuals, asks Fiedler, have been so wrong about Communism, as against its lowbrow enemies? And if so wrong about the issue of the age might we not be equally wrong about everything else? Ought we not therefore abandon our intellectuals' ghetto and take our place in the citizens' non-intellectual America? In a word, the end of innocence is a guilty return, as with the Moscow defendants, to the defined community—the address of "responsibility" is not the library, the study or the café but Main Street.

"The unpalatable truth we have been discovering is that the buffoons and bullies, those who *knew* really nothing about the Soviet Union at all, were right—stupidly right, if you will, accidentally right, right for the wrong reasons, but damnably right. This most continuing liberals, as well as ex-Communists and former fellow travelers, are prepared to grant in the face of the slave labor and oppression and police terror in the Soviet Union; but yet they, who have erred out of generosity and open-mindedness (!), cannot feel even yet on the same side as Velde or McCarthy or Nixon or Mundt."

It takes devotion to compile so gross a statement. Under the radiations of the fused "we," facts have grown bulbous, lost their outlines, finally dissolved. Nothing is left but a conflict of opinions. I will leave to Fiedler the explanation of how a man can be "right" without knowing anything about his subject. One recalls Lenin's incognito discussions with peasants who *knew* as against the damnably wrong intellectuals; their knowledge remains one of the mysteries of Bolshevik dialectic. Fiedler, however, cannot avail himself of Lenin's epistemology. His demand for self-surrender and intellectual abdication has nothing behind it but the will to move to the right side.

In this project Fiedler is aided by his approach, which consists of a literary criticism of events; actually, of their journalistic carica-

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tures. Instead of political ideas, Fiedler relies upon "a sensibility trained by the newer critical methods." Through symbolist elaboration Kenneth Burke used to find endless sociological and psychological clues in a cigarette ad. Fiedler's method is to place facing each other the popular and fellow-traveler stereotypes of Hiss, Chambers, McCarthy; getting in between he lets his "sensibility" quiver with their possible meanings. For him the contrasting "myths" of Left-wing and public opinion have a wonderfully complex existence. But reality, the Soviet Union, for example, as the most baffling social, political and historical fact of our civilization, is so bare of literary suggestion, so obvious, that it may be left to the judgment of those who know nothing.

The effect of Fiedler's application of his sensibility to the public showcases of criminals, liars and corpses is that the history of the past two decades appears ultimately as a two-character melodrama. One character speaks in refined tones and idealistic abstractions in favor of the CIO, the New Deal, Socialism, defense of the Soviet Union, the dangers of Fascism—the other mutters "Dirty Reds!" Number Two wins the argument by throwing Number One in the clink. Let me re-emphasize that the loser is not the *Communist* "liberal"—besides being "innocent" he has become also "generous and open-minded." But in return for these compliments to the fakers, fools and position-seekers of yesterday, all intellectuals are urged to crawl under the cloak of a spiritualized Hiss who would capitulate to the club wielder who was "right."

IV

Fiedler's "Afterthoughts on the Rosenbergs" appeared originally in *Encounter,* the international magazine published in London by the Congress for Cultural Freedom. His thesis is "that there were two Rosenberg cases," the actual case and the legendary one concocted by the Communists. Naturally, Fiedler is not interested in the "first," or actual, case. His meat is the legendary one that placed before the world the fiction of a pair of persecuted innocents. The Rosenbergs themselves, Fiedler contends, believed in their fictional counterpart so completely that they neither had any conscious guilt for having stolen the atom secrets nor any cause which they could openly champion. Thus they died as neither heroes nor martyrs—more important, they were not even human. A couple of Red cardboard cutouts were burned; there was nobody to feel sorry for, and the liberals who protested the electrocution were dupes. Just the same, Fiedler argues, it was an error to kill them, since America could have won a moral victory over Communism by sparing them. By acting as if there were a core of personal reality inside these self-made nothings we could have appeared before the world as champions of humanity.

In this scholasticist apologia, shuffling between psychological speculation and the author's insulting pose of moral conscience—for what but apology could induce the exile from humanity of a pair of corpses —Fiedler supplies a model of how to becloud historical events and the

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issues arising therefrom. After reading his article, I wrote a letter to *Encounter* pointing out its distortions. Although I was a contributor, my letter was not published. In its sense of Cold War "responsibility," Couch Liberalism had learned to mimic the toughness of Red Front liberalism with its why-rock-the-boat cynicism. I suggest that in doing so they have been laying the ground for future confessions.*

I reproduce below excerpts from my letter to *Encounter*. If my remarks are somewhat milder than they would be today, it is because in 1953 I still naively believed I was criticising the idiosyncrasies of an individual mind rather than of the spokesman of a trend.

> Fiedler . . . was shrewd to deal with Stalinism (is this still the right word?) in terms of its bad poetry. The characteristic of our time is that corn can be killing.
>
> The Rosenberg case was the absolutely deadly mixture of American corn and Moscow mash. That in this incredibly shallow farce the Rosenbergs were playing for their lives was, of course, pathetic. This pathos Fiedler brought out very well.
>
> I cannot, however, accept the explanation that the execution represented merely a negative failing on the part of the United States, the absence of a higher humanity, resulting from "political innocence," a "lack of moral imagination" and a "certain incapacity to really believe in Communists as people."
>
> Fiedler is gumming up the issue with misplaced profundity . . He is talking about psychology, morality and "myth," when we are confronted primarily with a question of injustice, the injustice of applying the death penalty in this case. What shocked liberal opinion was the objective factor of the disproportion between the crime as charged, and for which the defendants were convicted, and the death penalty. There was, and is, something hideous and unbelievable about transposing the act from the loose atmosphere of the time in which it was committed, when RESTRICTED DOCUMENTS used to lie around like leaves, to the tense one of the 1950s. When the act was committed no one was that serious . . . Granted that the Rosenbergs were justly convicted, and I don't question that any more than any other liberal, they did not seem to deserve the electric chair. (This question of timing was implicit in Justice Douglas' desire to review which law applied.)
>
> Sure, it was easier to perpetrate this injustice because Communists de-humanize themselves . . . But Sacco and Vanzetti, with whom Fiedler contrasts the Rosenbergs, weren't saved by their innocence or their human reality. Massachusetts did not experience them as "people" either. The fact is that no defendant is a "person"—*nor ought to be.* The law defines a man by his act. Justice requires only that he shall not be made to personify an act that he did not perform; and that the punishment shall not be cruel and inhuman and shall fit the crime.
>
> The psychological question regarding the inability of many people (including myself) to feel sympathy for the Rosenbergs as individuals . . . would never have arisen had it not been for the disproportion I

* Despite its derelictions, *Partisan Review* deserves credit for publishing in a recent issue Hans Mayerhoff's dissection of Diana Trilling's Couch Liberal resume of the Oppenheimer Case. I am aware of no such oppositional documents in *Commentary* during the past few years.

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have mentioned between the crime, in its specific quality as an act, and the penalty. Because of this disproportion the government itself, the press, the whole "official" U.S., had to be the first to resort to psychology and the "moral imagination," that is, to unreality . . . This monster-making, which took place before the Communists countered with their own milksop Frankenstein, is something quite different from "political innocence" or an "incapacity to accept Communists as human beings."

In denying the appeal for clemency, President Eisenhower devoted his statement entirely, as I recall, to overcoming the disproportion between the crime and the legal penalty and to justifying the death sentence . . . by holding these two feeble tools responsible for starting the Korean War and for the potential death of millions of Americans, in opposition to the statements of atomic scientists that the Rosenbergs could not possibly have transmitted, by the means alleged, information worth a good goddamn . . .

The scandal of the Rosenberg Case would not exist if, as Fiedler contends, the United States had simply failed in the opportunity to save the defendants from their own masquerade as patriotic Americans. The scandal exists, not because of lack of humanity, but because of human-all-too-human passions not properly restrained by law but on the contrary making use of law. Instead of preserving the objectivity and *abstractness* of law, the government took up the slack in the law by creating its own fictional person, that of the fiendishly efficient underground incendiary capable of setting whole continents on fire. This caricature, which caused every act of the defendants to take on an enormous magnitude, was needed to enable the court to render a brutal decision and the officialdom and the press to justify it. The dramatic imagination, *with its power of creating the person it judges,* supplemented the law and replaced the creature with the creation. This is demonism, not just an absence of Christian charity.

Fiedler is exactly wrong. It seemed to him there was too little humanity in the Case, instead of too much, because he looked at this affair as if it were a stage performance and compared the Rosenbergs as bad actors to Sacco and Vanzetti as genuine personalities . . . I think it is gruesome and a bit cowardly to drag out the corpses of Communists in order to show that there are no dead bodies here but self-constructed dummies incapable of bleeding. If the Communist executes not men but devils and animals that is his basic crime. If we in turn take over this process and forget about justice because we are dealing with "made" people, we are making our own contribution to the nightmare of the twentieth century.

V

To impede the process of turning American intellectual history of our own lifetime into a comic-strip encounter between a cock-eyed egghead and a right-thinking goon, I beg leave to cite a few data.

1) Whatever its weakness in understanding Communist power and techniques, liberalism was in no sense responsible for Communist vileness. It is false to say that a belief too naive in freedom, equality, individuality, induced adherence to the band, with its underband of party bosses, spies and masterminds. The liberal sentiment for radical

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equality and freedom was, in fact, the single intellectual mooring that held against the powerful drag of the totalitarian "we," supported by the offer of a heroic part, social scheming and material reward. Moreover, the sentiment of freedom alone *presented Marxism itself in its living intellectual form, that is, as a problem.* One of the few serious discussions concerning the Bolshevik conception of ends and means was begun by John Dewey around the time he went to Mexico to sit on the commission of inquiry before which Trotsky crushed the Moscow Trials and permanently damaged the revolutionary pretensions of international Communism (no, it was not Fiedler's buffoons who did that). The totalitarian liberals were too "responsible" to let the fate of an individual get in the way of the prestige of the USSR "just when we are fighting fascism." Like the Couch Liberals they were also too "responsible" to take thinking seriously.

2) The intellectuals and fellow travelers who remained with Communism through the execution of the old Bolsheviks, the extermination of POUMists and anarchists in Spain, the Stalin-Hitler Pact, the fight of the Communist International against French and British resistance to the Nazis, the partition of Poland, all of which took place in public and behind no curtain of any kind, were not innocent, to say nothing of "generous and open-minded." They were, as a type, middle-class careerists, closed both to argument and evidence, impatient with thought, psychopaths of their "radical" conformity. The "idealism" of this sodden group of Philistines, distinguished from the rest of their species by their more up-to-date smugness and systematic malice, can be emphasized only by one who ignores its function in hiding from themselves the cynicism which hardened their minds against any human plea or valid idea embarrassing to the Party. Feeling themselves on The Stage of History, they were prepared to execute the particular atrocities assigned to them, while keeping one eye on a post in the future International Power, the other on the present Good Spot in the government, the university, Hollywood, publishing. Most of their assignments were *intellectual* crimes, the concoction of arguments and boycotts to cover up acts of the Party anywhere. One recalls, for instance, the international libel let loose against André Gide when he published his account of his trip to the USSR.

All criticism by any one but the "buffoons" was met with the stare of the social climber or busy man of affairs. During the Spanish Civil War, Left professors and party-givers identified themselves with Malraux and Hemingway as ruthless franc-tireurs of the International. Without an appreciation of slapstick, in both its absurdity and cruelty, it is impossible to recall these "innocents" accurately. A leadership mania centering on a dream of the power that would fall into their hands after a new Ten Days That Shook The World staged under their direction transformed these sorry bourgeois into sleep-walking social highwaymen. Undoubtedly, there were individual sympathizers whom this image does not fit, professionals too busy to look beyond the Communist explanation of events. But these innocents, if it be innocent to be made a tool

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through phrases and flattery, were in a minority. The Communist intellectual, *as a distinct figure* produced by the movement, was innocent in one sense only: the *non sui juris* of pathology. He had been taken over completely by a false or assumed "we"—which is the basis of mystification in our century. But the spurious "we" is also the basis of modern terrorism. If the Communist intellectuals were merely "mistaken" so were the *gauleiters.* And the Couch Liberals, with their repentant "we," are bringing more innocents of this stamp into the world.

3) The most significant falsification of the ex-Communist confessional is the suppression of the account of the struggle that raged on the Left during the epoch of Communist influence in America. This omission in itself would be almost enough to prove that Couch Liberalism is a Communist Party spirit that has changed its spots.

Like their master in Moscow, the Communist intellectuals in America detested above all, not capitalism nor even fascism, to both of which the switching Party line taught them to accommodate themselves—their one hatred which knew no amelioration was that toward the independent radical intellectual. New ideas, modern art and literature, non-conformity in taste, behavior, morals, inevitably produced in them a venomous recoil; to the antipathy officially demanded by the Party toward its foes on the Left, the sordid leftish mass willingly added its own spite toward the outsiders who undermined their revolutionary conceit, especially in the days when the Party had traded in revolution for Defense Of The USSR. Soft to the point of servility to its foes on the Right, the Stalinist front never varied in its violence against those who struck in any form against its vanguard hijacking.

Instead of Communists, fellow travelers, liberals and radicals in one lump, the reality of the period lay in its battles. Nor were the attacks all from one side. I have before me a manifesto of the "League for Cultural Freedom and Socialism," published in the *Partisan Review* in Summer, 1939. Signed by 34 writers, it denounces the "so-called cultural organizations under control of the CP" as "the most active forces of reaction among advanced intellectual circles in the United States. Pretending to represent progressive opinion, these bodies are in effect but apologists for the Kremlin dictatorship. They outlaw all dissenting opinion from the Left, they poison the intellectual atmosphere with slander."* At the time this statement was issued Fiedler's bullies were more concerned with what they could sweat out of a Federal road-building contract than with the truth about the USSR. That some who signed it have, shrinking from the word "socialism" in the title, today adapted their past to the Couch Liberal distortion, does not alter the fact that such demands of the Left upon the intellectual conscience cost

* The manifesto also attacked the mounting power of conventionality and academicism in American art and literature, the censorship of movies by the Catholic Church, heresy hunting by the government, etc., all this during the Roosevelt Administration which, according to the current myth, was the Utopia of radicals and crackpots.

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the Communist Party dear each time it swung at the end of the tail of the Moscow bureaucracy. Granted that no permanent victory could have been won by intellectual means alone, the FBI, the courts and Committees have not assured that victory either. Let the Cold War give way to an era of East-West trade and collaboration, and Russian caviar and contracts, citations and free trips, will begin to count their ideological votes. Yet as a major intellectual current in the United States Communism had been rather decisively defeated long before a single ex-Communist had voided his memory from the witness stand.

The Communist who "passed" from Red to Ex is himself, very often, the product of this criticism. Is Fiedler, in his idolization of Chambers, simple-minded enough to believe the Witness' yarn that it was the light of God glowing through his offspring's ear and not an argument drummed in his own by his anti-Communist radical friends that first revealed to him what was wrong with Communism? The new Good Citizen cannot change his ancestry by forgetting his disreputable father.

THE CONFESSION ERA in the United States is about over. It is hard to imagine anyone adding facts likely to prove useful to the government's prophylaxis. Beyond the facts, each repentant Communist or radical has contributed his bit of himself to the collective protagonist of subversion and vanished into the common life.

The attempt to change past history has probably failed, largely because of the two-party system and the common sense and boredom of the public. Mystification has been quarantined in the quarters where it originated: the colony of the ex-radical intelligentsia.

An End to Innocence is already out of date. Its political and social morale belong to the days of McCarthy's putsch, when yesterday's vanguard saw itself blinking in the footlights with a pistol at its head. The moment this physical threat vanished the posture was bound to appear ludicrous.

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THE THIRTIES: FACT AND FANTASY

Irving Howe

I

Murray Kempton's book* of portraits from the radical thirties has been reviewed with praise by such writers as Arthur Schlesinger Jr., Reinhold Niebuhr and Daniel Bell. It is not hard to guess why. For apart from a pinch or two of iconoclasm, most of it rhetorical, Kempton presents a picture of the thirties that satisfies the needs and expectations of latter-day liberalism.

Part of Our Time seems to me a bad book, though not in the usual mediocre way. At first I thought my objections were mainly stylistic, but after a while it became clear to me that the problems of style were actually problems of politics and ideas.

As a writer Kempton manages to be both frenetic and florid at the same time. Partly, this betrays the influence of the *New York Post* school of journalism: *you gotta knock 'em dead every minute.* In this sensationalist liberal journalism, stress is laid upon the phrase rather than the thought, upon "color" rather than coherence; everything gives way to an unrestrained alliteration and fabricated tenseness. An effective column can sometimes be worked up from these mannerisms, but they almost always handicap a writer when he tries to present an ordered sequence of idea or fact.

No less damaging is Kempton's passion for "literary" effects. His book is filled with tags from the more fashionable poets and novelists, used in the way a radical journalist of the thirties might have used Marxist slogans. Substituting the click of remembrance for the process of communication, this method makes for an aura of false depth and knowingness. Every writer, no doubt, has a certain weakness for the pretty phrase, but in Kempton indulgence has become a system.

> Dying dreams [begins one chapter] sometimes last longest in hearts they have broken; hate, after all, can be the strongest of memories. That may be why so much of whatever pain and passion is left to the myth of the thirties is carried by its lost lovers, its apostates, and its armed disenchanted.

Still, it may be said, DISSENT isn't a literary magazine and what matters is the substance of Kempton's book. My point is, however, that a man who habitually writes this way *can't* present a serious and

*PART OF OUR TIME, by Murray Kempton. Simon & Schuster. 334 pp. $4.

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ordered opinion: the function of such a style is to gain admiration for itself (*look, spangles!*) rather than to communicate ideas and insights. Human experience becomes the occasion, sometimes the pretext for a "literary" performance.

II

In his approach to the thirties Kempton largely ignores, on principle, its social setting and political ideas. Instead, he is determined to concentrate on people. "Man's course," he gravely tells us, "is dictated by chance and heart far more often than Marx's laws of historic necessity would seem to allow . . . No law of history has been able to dispose of the pilgrim heart of man." For "man is a private and not a social animal."

As at other points in this book, one can only wonder whether Kempton has bothered to think out what he is saying. Does he really mean this, and is it therefore necessary to remind him of so obvious a fact as that "man" is both a private and a social animal, or is it all merely decoration, the intellectual passementerie of the fifties?

It has become fashionable to say that ideologies, if taken as the substance of history, tend to reify our sense of the past—tend, that is, to make us think as if it were the ideologies that had been alive rather than the people who held them. This is a valid point, particularly with regard to Marxist writers who sometimes talk as if "social forces" were living things rather than categories of analysis.

But there can be another way of treating the past, a kind of "anti-reifying," which is equally disastrous, and that is to present people as if they were isolated moral atoms without relation to the society and ideas of their time. All too often, that is what Kempton does. In his chapter on Chambers and Hiss, for example, he makes the interesting point that Hiss must be understood against the background of Southern gentility. No doubt; yet what was crucial in his adult experience had far less to do with the shabby gentility of Baltimore than with the shifts and turns of Stalinist strategy, about which Kempton has almost nothing to say.

In any case, when Kempton tries to suggest the distinctive quality of Stalinist experience during the thirties he can only fall back on a psycho-theological notion: "For the Communists offer one precious, fatal boon: they take away the sense of sin."

One is again troubled by the problem of meaning. Since Kempton surely knows that "sin" is a category of theology, is he trying to say that the power of the Communists rested upon their denial of God, along with which went a denial of sin? Probably not, since there is no explicit religious sentiment elsewhere in the book. Does he mean that Stalinism lent some of its followers a sense of power through an identification with the "forces of history"? Perhaps, but this has no necessary relation to sin, and only someone who holds religious belief has a legitimate right to connect it with sin. Or does Kempton suppose that a sense of humility, such as Stalinism destroyed in many of its followers,

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can survive in human beings only when it is coupled with a sense of sin?

Now another recent approach to Stalinism describes it as a quasi-religious movement, with its own rites of guilt, salvation, resurrection etc. One cannot deny that on a surface level this approach has a certain plausibility, for if we must use these facile analogies, it can be said that the Stalinists who humiliate themselves by public confession are experiencing . . . a sense of sin.

Before long Kempton gets around to this notion too. The radicals of the thirties, he writes, represented "an island of guilt surrounded by a sea of innocence." Putting aside for a moment the beguiling vision of American society in the thirties as "a sea of innocence," one is impelled to ask: is it possible for the radicals to have been freed of the sense of sin yet to form an island of guilt?

The curious thing about Kempton's "personalist" approach is that it does not even permit him to see the radicals of the thirties as individual persons. For if one removes the conditioning influences of the social context, and if one ignores the political ideas which agitated the lives of these people, what can be left but biographical detail and psychological guessing? And particularly if it is assumed, as Kempton all too easily does, that the radicals represented "a little group of the sick." At one point he speaks of "the relationship customary among Communists, who are seldom either blessed or cursed with naked intimacy." But if that is true, then they were mere monsters, and no portraiture employing the tints of humanity is possible. It is not true, of course, and in neither sense of "naked intimacy" were the Communists very different from other people. Some were loyal to their friends, others betrayed them. Some were men of character, others scoundrels and cowards. Some were idealists who gave their lives to an unworthy cause, others careerists who made a good thing out of idealism. And in most, of course, there was a mixture of good and bad; indeed, that was the peculiar strength of Stalinism, its skill in appealing to a corrupted sense of idealism.

III

In Kempton's book Stalinism as an institution that came into definitive being in the thirties, as an ideology and as a new social phenomenon hardly appears at all. There can, of course, be no objection to an author concentrating on individual figures rather than the social context or political ideologies. But it is precisely Kempton's failure to capture the sense of desperation and dislocation so characteristic of American life in the thirties, as well as his contempt for what he calls the political "fantasies" of the radicals, that prevents him from making more than two-dimensional cartoons of the Stalinists. As they appear in his book—the addlepated Elizabeth Bentley, the maniacal Whittaker Chambers, the wretched Anne Moos Remington, the vain and deluded Paul Robeson—all seem mere illustrations of abnormal psychology, and Stalinism becomes the sum of their sickness. Surely, however, this political movement must have something else to it, must

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be more complex, must contain social and political dimensions that account for its terrible potency.

But even if we put aside the rise of Stalinism as an international phenomenon and think of the thirties as a time when a certain number of Americans were deluded by an irrelevant "fantasy" of radicalism, it is necessary to see things a little more historically than Kempton does. Nor is it merely a question of the depression. Those of us who grew up in the thirties were profoundly affected, as we should have been, by the events in Europe. The seeming invincibility of Hitler, the tragic defeat of the Austrian Socialists, the shock of the Moscow trials—these were the events that helped shape our lives, and it would be the sheerest philistinism to say that they had nothing to do with American experience, that they were important to us because we cared only about Europe. Unless these elements of our experience are brought into full and vivid play, a book such as *Part of Our Time* serves little function but to amuse the liberals of the fifties with tales about the shame and silliness of the thirties.

Of silliness and shame there was, to be sure, a great deal. But to understand even these it is necessary to grant that in some important ways the radicalism of the thirties was "real," that it mattered. For if it was merely a compound of sickness, corruption and fantasy, what possible significance can there be to its betrayals and defeats? The sectarianism, the meanness, the ignorance, the ineptness of American radicalism in the thirties is worth troubling about only if the radical impulse itself contained something that was authentic. Otherwise, it was mere pathology and cheap comedy.

For all that he is sentimentally tied to the thirties, Kempton does not stop to consider such questions: they might bring him into contact with such terrible things as social conditions and political ideas. He writes, instead, that the Young Socialists framed "resolutions that moved with iron logic through a world of fantasies."

Now there is a certain truth in this, and Kempton is quite right in remarking that "the idea of a revolutionary dictatorship . . . remains an alien idea in America." But it also happens that many of the radical resolutions were anything but fantasy. Surely when the Trotskyists and some Socialists wrote that the theory of social fascism would lead to a victory for Hitler, they were doing more than indulging in fantasy. When the anti-Stalinist left kept pointing, in its cumbersome resolutions, to the increasing social stratification of the very Russia many liberals were hailing as a new paradise, it was more than fantasy. And it may even be that when the Socialists wrote that Roosevelt couldn't cure the depression short of war production, there was more reality than fantasy in their "iron logic."

Kempton's unwillingness to consider the thirties soberly, with even a *tentative* seriousness, betrays him into choosing mainly marginal types—Hiss, Bentley, Pressman, Mrs. Remington—as his subjects, people who were never directly involved in any of the radical movements, or

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if so, only for brief moments.* He has the right to focus on what interests him most, even if that happens to be the melodramatic figures known to readers of tabloids—but the price he pays is that his book completely fails to give a balanced portrait of the period. His book would have been helped tremendously if he had written a chapter on some ordinary person who joined the CP and without so much as hiding one pumpkin, did its work faithfully and selflessly. There *were* such people—otherwise Stalinism could never have been so effective and so dangerous. Suppose, for example, he had troubled to describe one of the Jewish garment workers in New York who lived and fought for the CP, mistakenly, sometimes viciously, but hardly in order to escape a sense of sin!

Kempton's picture might also have been a little more balanced, even if less sensational, had he given a fuller reckoning to the role of the anti-Stalinist left. Surely Sidney Hook, whose early writings influenced many of us as proving the possibility for an intelligent American Marxism, was as important as John Howard Lawson; surely Norman Thomas was then a more significant figure (Kempton makes him out as a sort of YPSL hostage among the adults) than *Part of Our Time* suggests. But, again, to notice such things would have required qualification and analysis.

IV

Part of his time Kempton writes as if he were an ex-radical abusing his past, part of his time he is a rather troubled man who looks back upon the thirties with a feeling that something precious has been lost.

On one side, Kempton is all for "reality," a term which in his book means social adaptation. Those who "adjusted" and left behind them the "fantasies" of radicalism win his admiration. So strongly is this a motif of the book that even Leslie Fiedler, who can hardly be accused of harboring sentimental nostalgia for the radical thirties, has felt compelled, in an interesting review in *Commentary,* to write that "Behind Mr. Kempton's temperate dismissal of the committed minority (not evil, you understand, just sick) is the philistine conviction that our major problems have all been solved . . . "

This side of Kempton comes through most shockingly in his chapter on Joe Curran, in which he describes how for years Curran worked with the Stalinists in the NMU and then cast them aside. Toward his former allies, writes Kempton, Curran was "implacable"; "he turned a face of stone to men with whom he had worked for so many years." That is all, Kempton has nothing stronger to say. But as it happens Curran, in defeating the Stalinists, used methods that made the CP look like the League for the Rights of Man. Kempton knows this as well as—in fact, better than—I do, for he observed it all as a reporter: he knows, though he no longer troubles to say, that the distinguished Vice-President of the CIO, Joe Curran, behaved like a dictatorial and

* In those chapters devoted to non-Stalinists (the Reuthers, the railway porters union) Kempton writes in a more relaxed and considered way.

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terroristic mob-leader. What, one wonders, has happened to Kempton's memory?

The other Kempton expresses admiration in his book for "the radical in America whose tradition was defeat and whose end was community . . . He was the radical who dared to stand alone, to whom no man called out in vain, to whom the lie was dishonorable . . . "

This is very eloquent, but one is not quite sure what it means. There are times when defeat is honorable and times when nothing but defeat is honorable, but surely to elevate it into the principle of radical existence is rather dubious. And especially so when one remembers the Kempton who is all for "reality" and contemptuous of "fantasy." Isn't this too convenient a dualism: social adaptation for the substance of life and for occasional soft moments a sprinkle of radicalism on the condition it remain pure, impotent and defeated?

Alas, even the virtues Kempton associates with "the old breed of radicalism" aren't very reassuring. In his most favorable portrait, that of Gardner Jackson, former secretary of the Sacco and Vanzetti Committee and later a New Deal official, Kempton, while characteristically never telling us what Jackson's political ideas are, does report that during the era when Lee Pressman was a brain-truster for the CIO, Jackson was brushed aside. After an eleven year wait, however, Jackson was added to the CIO staff by Phil Murray—which causes Kempton to conclude, "It seemed a sign and a symbol, as though the old breed of radical must wait outside the door for years on end, but, if he waited long enough, it would open for him."

Is this the glory of "defeat" in behalf of which Kempton had grown so lyrical? To become a CIO functionary—which often means to surrender whatever political independence one has—is it for *this* that "the old breed of radical" is to "stand alone," waiting outside the door?

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THE BRITISH LEFT IN THE 1930'S

William J. Newman

The great advantage of repudiating one's past is that it provides a standpoint from which to scourge the past of others. Accordingly we are now being shown by Mr. Lionel Trilling that in Britain, just as in America, the 1930s was an age in which men with the minds of children wreaked havoc with the moral instincts of man. In his introduction to the recently republished edition of George Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia* Mr. Trilling describes Orwell as the original anti-Communist and tells us that the British liberal was a dolt for not listening to him. He celebrates Orwell as a decent sort of fellow who stood out among the riff-raff of the time simply because he was decent. In this violation of Orwell's thought Mr. Trilling delicately avoids the revolutionary thrust of Orwell's argument and forgets what it was like to be a liberal or a radical—in Britain as well as America—in the thirties.

It is a failure to see the problems of the thirties as they then existed which cripples the work of those who would re-write the history of those years. Such failures are in essence a refusal to understand that in the 1930s the radical and liberal faced concrete political and economic problems which forced them into an awareness that politics demanded deeds. What could be done to end mass unemployment and the dole? What political maneuver could galvanize a standpat government? How could the fascist threat be thrown back? And above all: what could the individual do to change the society responsible for these disorders?

That Trilling and others can discuss the era in a way that avoids consciousness of these problems tells us more about our own age than the thirties. But both Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia* and another book by a Britisher, *Generation in Revolt,* give us a chance to revalue the revaluation as far as they concern Britain. For both books demonstrate that it was not the psychopaths, traitors, and the naive who ruined the age, but rather, that the problems of the age could be avoided only by psychopaths, traitors and the naive.

Each nation in the West had its own variation of political and economic crisis. In Britain the fascist threat augmented a crisis of already major proportions in the unemployment of the 1920s. This was itself enough to distort the normal beat of British political life. What it meant, to one person at least, is shown in a book which has

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slipped in and out of the bookstalls without much notice; Mary McCarthy, now a member of the Trade Union Congress hierarchy, in her *Generation in Revolt* (1953) recants her Communist past but has the honesty to say that "even with my experience of the dark side of Communism I realized (in 1951) that I could not sincerely regret having passed through the ranks of the Communist Party, despite the confusion it had made of my life." She is not a traitor who is discussing her past sins, nor has she any more neurotic impulses than, say, Lionel Trilling. But she was a member of the Lancashire working class in the twenties and thirties, and finding herself surrounded by a wall of indifference—economic, political and personal—she chose Communism as a way of breaking out.

An old story. And a frustrating experience, since it has the usual denouement. But what makes her *Generation in Revolt* more than usually interesting is her recall of the life of Lancashire and the political problem it symbolized for the British left. The emotional as well as the economic impact of mass unemployment in a Lancashire mill town created a Waste Land—the real thing and not a literary reference picked up from reading Eliot. Growing up as a millhand with no further education than that of the other workers, she had to decide what to do to improve her position and that of the other workers. It is one thing to read about the Waste Land, another thing to live in it.

The political and economic crisis in Lancashire was simple: a hungry working class, a hostile government, a politically impotent Labor Party. It was necessary to find a way out. (It was an age obsessed with the idea of The Way Out, for which it no doubt deserves censure for escapism.) Miss McCarthy's first solution was emigration to America where she found the good living which could not be had in Britain. But forced by her family to return and cornered by desperation in a hated land, she expressed her despair in political attack. It is her description of the will to fight back rather than of the means she chose that makes her book useful, for it reminds us that there was something to fight against. And her actions were of a piece with the age. Others chose other means, and for Miss McCarthy herself the Labor Party, the Independent Labor Party and the Communists only varied in the vitality of their struggle against poverty—their will to strike back.

To someone living in Lancashire in the thirties the issue was not Russia vs. Britain. It was how to force the Tory Government out of power, or at least to force it to improve the daily living conditions of the workless workers. Ideology meant less than food. To say that Miss McCarthy should not have joined the Communist Party is all very well; indeed, one reason she should not have joined was that even in terms of her standard of action, it was less effective than the Labor Party. But much of the moralistic hindsight of the fifties misses the point that for people like Miss McCarthy the problem was how to take radical political action in Lancashire. And, as it then seemed, radical political action could mean the Communist Party as well as the Labor Party. A mistake, of course; but before any moral judgments can be passed with

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regard to this mistake, it must at least be seen in the context of its own time.

It is the virtue of Miss McCarthy's book that she shows the urgency of the need to act in a radical way. That is also the virtue of *Homage to Catalonia,* for Orwell too was concerned with the problem of how to save his skin and the skin of others by changing the condition of civilization. It was a large order, as he himself makes clear, but it was also a desperate desire.

If both he and Miss McCarthy went into their experience full of hope for good—it may be doubted whether they would otherwise have exposed themselves, he to bullets, she to family estrangement—they both came out with some considerable sophistication as to what the issues were. In Orwell's case, once again a Britisher found that right political action meant coping with a specific political situation and not merely affirming an abstract moral good. Still, man's conscience had not yet been abolished and Orwell in the specific circumstances of the Spanish Civil War felt impelled to participate despite its political confusions. Even in his most disillusioned moments he continued to dramatize the issue to the point where he thought that although in Spain the enemy was Franco, it was a war of civilizations that was being fought.

TODAY SOME PEOPLE SEEM TO KNOW BETTER, for in the current absorption with Communism the danger of fascism in the thirties is all but forgotten. But as it happened there were both Fascists and Communists in Spain, and this made politics complicated and hazardous. What did you do—asked Orwell—when the Communists with whom you were conducting a common struggle against Fascism turned against you? The liberal had apparently gotten himself into a mess; perhaps he should have stayed at home. Not only was he, in the person of Orwell, being shot through the neck but he had naively walked right into the trap prepared for him many years ago by the Stalinists.

Orwell, however, enlarges his sin by seeing that anti-Communism alone was no answer to this problem, and in fact he *has* no answer. Maybe there was no satisfactory answer, but that only heightened the dilemma, for inaction and an apolitical mood in an age of civil war was in fact an answer—defeat by abdication.

To deny this dilemma is to deny that fascism existed, a not impossible feat to be sure. Orwell at least had no doubts, and he thought the Spanish Civil War was the possible turning of the tide against fascism. He also saw a revolution going on underneath the surface of civil war and found it good. The tragedy lay in his discovery that both the revolution and the resistance were killed by "the temporary alliance that fascism, in certain forms, forces upon the bourgeois and the worker." Although he came to the conclusion that the "war was worth winning even if the revolution were lost" he also realized that "perhaps the P.O.U.M. and the Anarchist slogan: 'the war and the revolution are inseparable,' was less visionary than it sounds." Here, in this statement, there was something for the British Leftist to think

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about. Perhaps the British Leftist was failing his cause not because he was too revolutionary but because he was not revolutionary enough. Perhaps he did not understand what revolution meant, had not thought enough about it, and had not realized the possibilities in the situation both in Spain and in Britain.

Orwell, like so many who went to Spain, concluded that the political situation was depressing. But he believed he had to make a practical choice and thus he concluded that "it did not follow that the (Spanish Loyalist) Government was not worth fighting for . . ." This not very profound but matter-of-fact conclusion was reached by one who had to exist in the reality of the time and in real political situations—in contrast with the liberal of 1955 who makes no choice more serious than what to grow in his suburban garden but is angry with those who once did make a choice.

Orwell, like Miss McCarthy, met up with political power and did not like it, but that did not make the problems of politics less pressing. Both made what was for them a moral choice; a choice not only of sides—that was easy—but a decision to act and to meet the dilemmas that problems of politics involved. One such dilemma was the need for Orwell to support a Republican government in Spain which he saw as anti-revolutionary.

In retrospect it might be felt that it would have been better for him to act through joining the Labor Party and serving as a leaven within that "soggy mass." But it *was* a soggy mass and it is understandable that for people who felt the need was to fight here and now the Labor Party should have had a very limited attraction. Impatient, they turned elsewhere—and made their terrible mistakes. But once it is realized that in the circumstances facing the British left there was perhaps no satisfactory answer to the question of how to take political action and that nonetheless a political decision had to be made, the problems of the left in the thirties become less susceptible to cliches and more to human feeling.

It was not irresponsibility but the need to fight back that sent Orwell to Spain. It was not irresponsibility but the dole which sent Miss McCarthy into the Communist Party. *Any* choice was a dangerous choice—but then Orwell, McCarthy and a long list of others thought it was a dangerous age.

THE POLITICAL PROBLEMS WHICH THE BRITISH LEFT faced were practical and rational problems of means and ends; whether the answers were right or wrong they were at least rational answers. Nor is there a need to call in psychology to explain the problem. Quite simply, a melancholy appreciation of social dissolution was no longer possible; the angry rejection by both Stephen Spender and Louis MacNeice of T. S. Eliot are evidence of the change in thought, if any evidence is needed. A new political mood was created. If the note now was alternating fits of heroism and/or suicide with utopian visions as found, say, in the poetry of C. Day Lewis, it was nevertheless a fact that living

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in the thirties involved for the Englishman a public as well as a private aspect. Politics, more specifically the politics of the Left, became a way of seeing all things, a general point of view. It became a way of examining not the individual's predicament alone but also the predicament of the individual as a public man, of the individual in society.

Thus the crisis of the 1930s went further than questions of political tactics and penetrated deep into the political problems which Orwell faced in Spain and Miss McCarthy in Lancashire. There were fundamental needs. One was to complete the collapse of official liberalism which up to then had been the common doctrine in Britain. It was essential now to ask, what, in the crisis of the 1930s was the role of the accepted political shibboleths of British public life? There was an especial need for such an examination in Britain where a humanitarian reaction to political problems had long been good form and where it was becoming obvious that the stock responses of good will and progressive enlightenment not only failed as an explanation of human behavior but also as a way of political life. Yet these outmoded attitudes dominated not only the Conservative political organs but also the Labor Party.

What indeed could the liberal belief in rationality do against the ugliness and irrationality which was spreading over Europe? Rex Warner asks this question in *The Professor* in which a representative of the old liberal culture faces traitors and political passion in a Kafka-like world and fails to control or even understand the situation. Warner's answer was that woolly-headed good will was no longer sufficient. One can complain that his Professor is more woolly-headed than even a professor need be, and still grasp the point. One may also doubt the extent to which the British left was actually throwing overboard the fundamental postulates of liberalism and still recognize that there was felt a need to drive home the lesson that knowledge and good thoughts were not enough.

The British intellectual of the 1930's was learning rapidly what Malraux had discovered a little earlier in China; the division of political forces was absolute; piety was insufficient, and there was a need to meet death head on. Optimism for the here and now was irrelevant; that could be saved for the future. Stephen Spender put it this way: man must immerse himself in the destructive element before he can come out on the other side. Liberalism had nothing to say about destructive elements.

That this attack on the official beliefs of liberalism contained some considerable amounts of superficiality and masochism is now clear. But much of it also corresponded to political reality, a fact that is made painfully obvious when one observes in Thomas Jones' *Diary with Letters* the collapse of Stanley Baldwin's good will into indecision, doubt, and flight from reality.

If attacking liberalism satisfied some part of the desire to immerse oneself in the destructive element, the second demand which the times made on the Britisher was more devastating. It was an unhappy

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time for the British left. America at least had the New Deal which in fits and starts gave a kaleidoscopic illusion of action. It therefore acted as a magnet for the intellectuals and drew their energy into orderly politics. The British left had no such political movement in which to put its hopes. The British Labor Party had long since given off nothing but sounds of collapse, and the Trade Union Congress had had its vitality sucked out of it by the failure of the 1926 general strike. The need of the British left to work its way through what Spender called the political-moral problem therefore presented a monumental tasks: nothing less than a new political point of view. This indeed is the theme of his book *The Destructive Element*: not merely the immersion in the destructive element but getting through it to the other side where belief is possible. The belief in belief became a mania: to mock at the ruins was no longer enough.

THE REVOLT OF THE LEFT POSED some complicated problems of morals and politics, and it was the function of the age to identify these problems and to solve them. The Auden-Spender group perhaps came as close as any among the writers of the thirties to dealing with these questions when they considered the civilization of their time and power within that civilization. These were old questions but were now seen anew in the context of democratic incapacity and external threat. The awakening of the political sense, the awareness of political crisis may have led to fevered responses; there was for example, a preternatural and obsessive concern with the masses and mass action. But behind this incantation lay a more profound sense of the times. Politics entered the core of life and was seen as a part of the question, "What is it we want really? For what end and how?" Politics as something done by the British governing classes was replaced by the fusion of politics and society. Hitler too had fused politics and society, and the left met his challenge with its own formula of a totality in which the essential element was—ironically—a tenacious liberal belief in freedom and a trust in the future. If the latter was not incompatible with Communism, the former was, and it took much less time than is generally assumed for most of the British left to realize the fact.

The questions asked in Britain by the poets, writers and university dons turned political hacks were those which the rest of Britain was asking itself. In making explicit these questions, in stirring up what Louis MacNeice called the right discontent, Britain's intellectuals served her better than they knew, for it was the fact that these questions had been asked that made possible sophistication concerning the nature of the crisis before the fire bombs fell. It was the way in which the elite of Britain educated, if not the masses, then themselves. Despite their revolutionary pose it was as the representative embodiment of the radical-liberal soul of Britain that the intellectuals worked in the 1930s. When they attacked the liberal creed, they were stripping it of its flabbiness and preparing it to fight back. When they moved

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from a consideration of the individual's crisis to the crisis in Britain, they were preparing Britain to fight back.

Today we like to think of ourselves as sophisticated and the 1930s as innocent and naive. Perhaps just the opposite is true. Britain, along with other nations, had to deal with problems of economics which led directly to problems of political freedom, action and belief. Now these specific problems are no longer with us, and since the thirties are not likely to return again the responses of the time are in the public domain as history. And a good thing too, for it was a decade which questioned practically every value which a bourgeois civilization had managed to create. But before we repudiate the past that made so many of us, including those who are most committed to fashions of the moment, it is well to remember that in a period of collapse and terror it was no bad thing to try to act, however mistakenly or inadequately, as the conscience of an age.

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THE HUMAN IMPLICATIONS OF INSTINCTIVISTIC "RADICALISM"

Erich Fromm

I am glad to have the opportunity of answering Herbert Marcuse's article on the "Social Implications of Freudian Revisionism" in the last issue of this journal. This is so partly because Marcuse singles me out as a representative of the "revisionist" theory and accuses me of having changed from a radical thinker and critic of society into a spokesman for adjustment to the status quo. More importantly, I want to answer Marcuse because he touches upon some of the most significant problems of psychoanalytic theory and its social implications, problems which are of general interest for any student of contemporary society.

However, I cannot follow Marcuse's procedure of lumping various "revisionist" writers together. I can only speak for myself; and this for a very good reason: although there are certain points which Horney's and Sullivan's writings have in common with my own, they differ fundamentally with regard to the very problems which Marcuse deals with in his paper. (I have myself pointed to various basic differences with Sullivan in *The Sane Society**.) This lumping together has the unfortunate result that Marcuse substantiates his brief against me by quoting Horney or Sullivan whenever there is no passage from my writings which would serve the purpose.

MARCUSE'S PAPER contains two main theses. First, that Freudian theory is not only correct psychologically, but a *radical* theory in its explicit and implicit criticism of society. Second, that my own theories are philosophically idealistic, advising adjustment to present alienated society, and only paying lip service to the criticism of this same society.

Let us take up these two claims, one after another:

Indeed, it is true that Freud was a critic of society, *but his criticism was not that of contemporary capitalistic society, but of civilization as such.* Happiness, for Freud, is satisfaction of the sexual instinct, specifically of the wish for free access to all available females. Primitive man, according to Freud, has yet to cope with exceedingly few restric-

* Published by Rinehart, Erich Fromm's latest book will be reviewed in the next issue of DISSENT.—Ed.

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tions to the satisfaction of these basic desires. Furthermore, he can give vent to his aggression. It is the repression of these desires which leads to ever-increasing civilization and, at the same time, to an increasing incidence of neurosis. "Civilized man," says Freud, "has exchanged some part of his chances of happiness for a measure of 'security.' "* Freud's concept of man was the same which underlies most anthropological speculation in the nineteenth century. Man, as he is molded by capitalism, is supposed to be the natural man, hence capitalism the form of society which corresponds to the needs of human nature. This nature is competitive, aggressive, egotistical. It seeks its fulfillment in victory over one's competitors. In the sphere of biology this was demonstrated by Darwin in his concept of the survival of the fittest; in the sphere of economics in the concept of the *homo economicus,* held by the classical economists. In the sphere of psychology Freud expressed the same idea about man, based on the competitiveness resulting from the nature of the sexual instinct. *"Homo homini lupus;* who has the courage to dispute it in the face of all the evidence in his own life and in history?",** Freud asks. Man's aggressiveness, Freud thinks, has two sources; one, the innate striving for destruction (death instinct) and the other the frustration of his instinctual desires, imposed upon him by civilization. While man may channel part of his aggression against himself, through the Super-Ego, and while a minority can sublimate their sexual desire into brotherly love, aggressiveness remains ineradicable. Men will always compete with and attack each other, if not for material things, then for the

> prerogatives in sexual relationships, which must arouse the strongest rancour and most violent enmity among men and women who are otherwise equal. Let us suppose this were also to be removed by instituting complete liberty in sexual life, so that the family, the germ-cell of culture, ceased to exist; one could not, it is true, foresee the new paths on which cultural development might then proceed, but one thing one would be bound to expect, and that is that the ineffaceable feature of human nature would follow wherever it led.†

Since for Freud love is in its essence sexual desire, he is compelled to assume a contradiction between love and social cohesion. Love, according to him, is by its very nature egotistical and antisocial, and the sense of solidarity and brotherly love are not primary feelings rooted in man's nature, but aim-inhibited sexual desires.

On the basis of his concept of man, that of his inherent wish for unlimited sexual satisfaction, and of his destructiveness, Freud must arrive at a picture of the necessary conflict between all civilization and mental health and happiness. Primitive man is healthy and happy because he is not frustrated in his basic instincts, but he lacks the

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* S. Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents,* translated from the German by J. Riviere, The Hogarth Press, Ltd., London, p. 92.
** *Ibid.* p. 85.
† *Ibid.*..p. 89.

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blessings of culture. Civilized man is more secure, enjoys art and science, but he is bound to be neurotic because of the continued frustration of his instincts, enforced by civilization.

For Freud, social life and civilization are essentially and necessarily in contrast to the needs of human nature as he sees it, and man is confronted with the tragic alternative between happiness based on the unrestricted satisfaction of his instincts, and security and cultural achievements based on instinctual frustration, hence conducive to neurosis and all other forms of mental sickness. Civilization, to Freud, is the product of instinctual frustration, and thus the cause of mental illness. It is obvious that from Freud's standpoint, there is no hope for any fundamental improvement of society, since no social order can transcend the necessary and unavoidable conflict between the claims of human nature and happiness on the one side, and the claims of society and civilization on the other. Is this a radical theory, a radical criticism of alienated society?

Freud makes a *specific* criticism of contemporary society only with regard to one point. He criticizes it for its over-strict sexual morality, which produces neurosis to a greater extent than necessary. This criticism is not at all concerned with the socio-economic structure of society, but only with its sexual morality, and it is part of the same attitude of tolerance which we find in modern education, criminology and psychiatry (as I have pointed out in my paper "The Social Conditions of Psychoanalytic Therapy" which Marcuse mentions in his article, published in *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, 4 IV 1935). This criticism of contemporary society is of the same spirit as that of all reformist propositions.

THE SECOND PREMISE OF MARCUSE is the assumption that Freud's theory of instincts is a radical theory, because it is materialistic and goes to the roots. I find it amazing that Marcuse should commit the error of calling a theory which is entirely of the same spirit as that of nineteenth-century bourgeois materialism "radical." As anyone who has read Jones' biography of Freud can see very clearly, Freud was greatly influenced by materialist physiologists like Brücke, du Bois-Reymond, and others. According to their views, the clues to all phenomena of man were the physical-chemical ones, and Freud's libido theory is built on this basis. It is this type of materialism which had been overcome by Marx's historical materialism, in which the *activity* of the total personality in his relations to nature and to other members of society is the Archimedean point from which history and social changes are explained.

Starting from this kind of materialism one arrives at a theory of human nature which is by no means "ideological." Such a theory is based on the fact of the "human situation," on the specific conditions of human existence. Man, having awareness of himself, has transcended the natural world; he is life aware of itself. At the same time he remains a part of nature, and from this contradiction follow his basic passions

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and strivings, the need to relate himself to others, the need to transcend his own role as a creature by creating (or destroying), the need to have a sense of identity and a frame of orientation or devotion. These needs can be fulfilled in various ways—the difference between these ways is the difference between mental health and illness, between happiness and unhappiness. Yet they *must* be fulfilled unless man is to become insane. On the other hand, the fulfillment of all instinctual needs, including sex, is not a sufficient condition for happiness—not even for sanity. The concept of human existence is not less real than that of the instincts, and it is not idealistic; it is broader and conceived in terms of activity and practice—rather than of a specific physiological substance.

To believe that a theory which demands greater freedom for the sexual instinct is for this very reason a radical theory is an error which can be understood either as the result of a misunderstood materialism, or as a reaction to the fact that the conservative and reactionary groups were adherents of a strict and repressive sexual morality in the first part of the twentieth century. Thus it appears that sexual emancipation was a radical step in the emancipation from oppression. However, the attitude of the Nazis toward sexual freedom was sufficiently concrete evidence that this assumption was wrong. The Nazis, far from following the reactionary ideology in this point, favored sexual promiscuity and were extraordinarily permissive in their sexual code. But the example of the Nazis is not even necessary. Unlimited sexual satisfaction is only part of a characteristic trait of twentieth-century capitalism, the need for mass consumption, the principle that every desire must be satisfied immediately, that no wish must be frustrated.

THE PRINCIPLE THAT DESIRES must be satisfied without much delay has also determined sexual behavior, especially since the end of the First World War. A crude form of misunderstood Freudianism used to furnish the appropriate rationalizations; the idea being that neuroses result from "repressed" sexual strivings, that frustrations were "traumatic," and the less you repressed the healthier you were. Even parents were anxious to give their children everything they wanted lest they became frustrated and acquired a "complex." Unfortunately, many of these children as well as their parents landed on the analyst's couch, provided they could afford it.

The greed for things and the inability to postpone the satisfaction of wishes as characteristic of modern man has been stressed by thoughtful observers, such as Max Scheler and Bergson. It has been given its most poignant expression by Aldous Huxley in *Brave New World.* Among the slogans by which the adolescents in the Brave New World are conditioned, one of the most important ones is *"Never put off till tomorrow the fun you can have today".* It is hammered into them, "two hundred repetitions, twice a week from fourteen to sixteen and a half." This instant realization of wishes is felt as happiness. "Everybody's happy nowadays" is another of the Brave New

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World slogans; people "get what they want and they never want what they can't get." This need for the immediate consumption of commodities and the immediate consummation of sexual desires is coupled in the Brave New World, as in our own. It is considered immoral to keep one "love" partner beyond a relatively short time. "Love" is short-lived sexual desire, which must be satisfied immediately.

> The greatest care is taken to prevent you from loving anyone too much. There's no such thing as a divided allegiance; you're so conditioned that you can't help doing what you ought to do. And what you ought to do is on the whole so pleasant, so many of the natural impulses are allowed free play, that there really aren't any temptations to resist.*

This lack of inhibition of desires leads to the paralysis and eventually the destruction of the self. If I do not postpone the satisfaction of my wish (and am conditioned only to wish for what I can get), I have no conflicts, no doubts; no decision has to be made; I am never alone with myself, because I am always busy—either working, or having fun. I have no need to be aware of myself as myself because I am constantly absorbed having pleasure. *I am a system of desires and satisfactions;* I have to work in order to fulfill my desires—and these very desires are constantly stimulated and directed by the economic machine. Most of these appetites are synthetic; even sexual appetite is by far not as "natural" as it is made out to be. It is to some extent stimulated artificially. And it needs to be if we want to have people as the contemporary system needs them—people who feel "happy," who have no conflicts, who are guided without the use of force.

The principle, then, that love is identical with sexual desire, and the idea that the emancipation of man lies in the complete and unrestricted satisfaction of his sexual desire is, in fact, part of the cement which binds men together in the present phase of capitalism. It was a reformist ideology in the beginning of the century; to think of it as a radical theory *now,* means not to have learned anything from the development of society during the last thirty years.

I COME NOW TO MARCUSE'S second thesis: his criticism of "revisionism."

Marcuse claims that Freud's most basic concepts, as for instance the function of the unconscious, "were redefined [by me] in such a way that their explosive connotations were all but eliminated.... Psychoanalysis was reoriented on the traditional consciousness-psychology of pre-Freudian texture." Marcuse does not even try to substantiate this criticism. My own work (and that of Sullivan and to a large extent that of Horney), is centered around the conflict between unconscious and conscious strivings. If one assumes that the unconscious is identical with sexual strivings, one might be blind enough to assume that any theory which does not assume that the sexual instinct is *the* driv-

* Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World.* The Vanguard Library, p. 196.

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ing force disregards the unconscious,—but it requires a good deal of naïveté, at best, to arrive at this conclusion.

Related to this point is Marcuse's insistence that "secondary factors and relationships (of the mature person and his cultural environment) are now given the dignity of primary processes," thus neglecting the impact of early infancy, "the formative period of the universal fate in the individual." I am at a loss to see how Marcuse can have missed the fact that Sullivan's work is almost entirely concerned with the development of childhood, and that I have stated that the character of a person is mainly determined by his childhood situation. I have tried to show in *Escape from Freedom* that this fact, however, is not in contrast to the impact of society on the individual, because the family is "the psychological agency of society" which has the function to mold the character of the growing person in a way useful and necessary for the continued functioning of an existing society. Marcuse does not refer to one of the key concepts in all my writings, from the article in 1932 to the present, namely that of the "*social character.*" I have defined social character as the nucleus of the character structure which is shared by most members of the same culture. The members of the society and of the various classes or status groups within it have to behave in such a way as to be able to function in the sense required by the social system. It is the function of the social character to canalize the energies of the members of society in such a way that their behavior is not a matter of conscious decision as to whether or not to follow the social pattern, but one of *wanting to act as they have to act* and at the same time finding gratification in acting according to the requirements of the culture. In other words, it is the social character's function to *mold and channel human energy within a given society for the purpose of the continued functioning of this society.*

More important, however, than all these distortions or misunderstandings, is Marcuse's central point, that to speak of love, integrity, inner strength, etc., means to speak on an ideological level. Only the sexual instinct is the sub-stratum of reality which underlies the ideological super-structure of love, etc. Would Marcuse claim that hate, destructiveness, sadism, is an ideology? Obviously not. The only controversy which might arise is whether one explains them as being rooted in the sexual instinct, in the death instinct, or in other fundamental factors of human existence. Love and inner strength on the other hand are, according to Marcuse, only ideologies. His argument is that in contemporary alienated society there does not exist any love, integrity or inner strength as a reality. He claims that the goal of "optimal development of a person's potentialities and the realization of his individuality" is "essentially unattainable . . . because the established civilization itself, in its very structure, denies it." He goes on to say that

> either one defines "personality" and "individuality" in terms of their possibilities *within* the established form of civilization, then their realization is for the vast majority tantamount to successful adjustment. Or one defines them in terms of their transcending content, including their

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> socially denied potentialities beyond (and beneath) their actual existence: in this case, their realization would imply transgression beyond the established form of civilization and to radically new modes of "personality" and "individuality" incompatible with the prevailing ones. Today, this would mean "curing" the patient to become a rebel or (which is saying the same thing) a martyr. The revisionist concept vacillates between the two definitions. Fromm revives all the time-honored values of idealistic ethics as if nobody had ever demonstrated their conformistic and repressive features. He talks of the productive realization of the personality, of care, responsibility, and respect for one's fellow men, of productive love and happiness as if man could actually practice all this and still remain sane and full of "wellbeing" in a society which Fromm himself describes as one of total alienation, dominated by the commodity relations of the "market".

What Marcuse is saying here is that any person who has integrity and is capable of love and happiness, in present-day capitalistic society, must either become a martyr or insane. He makes slight reservations himself by speaking of these goals as being "essentially" unattainable, and of their realization as being tantamount to adjustment for the "vast majority," but he does not pay any attention to these important qualifications. I make it very clear in my own description of the productive character that he is rare in an alienated society, and in contrast to the marketing orientation which is the rule. I analyze the productive orientation as being one which transcends the prevailing pattern, and only a biased reading can ignore the fact that I emphasize again and again that happiness, love, as I define them, are not the same virtues as those called love and happiness in an alienated society. But all this is very different from saying that only a martyr or a psychotic can have integrity or love today.

It is amazing that Marcuse should neglect his own dialectical position to the extent of drawing a black and white picture, and forget that the alienated society already develops in itself the elements which contradict it. To equate a rebel with a martyr in Western capitalistic society is rather unrealistic, unless somebody is so deeply conformist that to be a rebel to him means to be a martyr. If Marcuse were right, then indeed we would have to arrive at the conclusion that there is no place for love and happiness whatsoever in capitalistic society. The only difference between the average man and the "radical thinker," then, is that the average man is an opportunistic automaton without knowing it, while the radical thinker is the same, but knowing it. In Marcuse's theory obviously the dehumanization of man has to reach its completion, and then, and only then, can his liberation take place. Anybody who studies the conditions for happiness and love is, according to Marcuse, betraying radical thought. Anybody who tries to help himself and others to realize to some extent these traits is, unless a martyr or a fool, a companion to Rev. Peale. I believe, on the contrary, that to study the conditions of love and integrity means to discover the reasons for their failure in capitalistic society; that the analysis of love

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is social criticism; that to attempt to practice these virtues amounts to the most vital act of rebellion. Unfortunately, this is not only an academic question. The neglect of the human factor, and the callousness towards moral qualities in political figures, which was so apparent in Lenin's attitude, is one of the reasons for the victory of Stalinism. Stalinism is the realization of socialism, with the exception of its human goals. Since any improvement of the human situation will depend on the simultaneous change in the economic, political and in the human characterological spheres, no theory can be radical which takes a nihilistic attitude toward man.

I agree with Marcuse that contemporary capitalistic society is one of alienation. Hence one in which the humanistic goals of life, those of happiness and individuality, are rarely realized. (In *The Sane Society,* which has just been published, I deal with the effects of alienation on the individual). But I disagree entirely with the view that as a consequence these qualities exist in nobody, that to analyze their nature and the conditions for their development is ideological, and that the encouragement of their practice means preaching adjustment. Marcuse's position is an example of human nihilism disguised as radicalism.

In India—and Other Lands

One of the nicest things that has happened to DISSENT in months was the recent donation of $100 to be used for gift subscriptions. Most of these went to foreign readers who were not in a position to pay for their copies. A few such subscriptions remain open. The fact is, however, that there are many people in Europe who would like to receive the magazine but can't afford the price—so that contributions for this special purpose are always useful.

Our circulation abroad is slowly increasing. Arrangements have been worked out with English agents for handling the magazine, and we are especially pleased that *Janata,* the socialist weekly published in Bombay, will now become the agent for *Dissent* in India. *Janata* will accept subscriptions for us in India, and we for it in the United States. Send to *Janata,* National House, 6 Tulloch Road, Appolo Bunder, Bombay. The manager of *Janata* also writes that it has reprinted a number of articles from *Dissent.*

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THE FOLKLORE OF POPULISM*

Richard Hofstadter

I. The Two Nations

For a generation after the Civil War, a time of great economic exploitation and waste, grave social corruption and ugliness, the dominant note in American political life was complacency. Although dissenting minorities were always present, they were submerged by the overwhelming realities of industrial growth and continental settlement. The agitation of the Populists, which brought back to American public life a capacity for effective political indignation, marks the beginning of the end of this epoch. In short run the Populists did not get what they wanted, but they released the flow of protest and criticism that swept through American political affairs from the 1890's to the beginning of the first World War.

Where contemporary intellectuals gave the Populists a perfunctory and disdainful hearing, later historians have freely recognized their achievements and frequently overlooked their limitations. Modern liberals, finding the Populists' grievances valid, their programs suggestive, their motives creditable, have usually spoken of the Populist episode in the spirit of Vachel Lindsay's bombastic rhetoric:

Prairie avenger, mountain lion,
Bryan, Bryan, Bryan, Bryan,
Gigantic troubadour, speaking like a siege gun,
Smashing Plymouth Rock with his boulders from the West

There is indeed much that is good and usable in our Populist past. While the Populist tradition had defects that have been too much neglected, it does not follow that the virtues claimed for it are all fictitious. Populism was the first modern political movement of practical importance in the United States to insist that the federal government has some responsibility for the common weal; indeed, it was the first such movement to attack seriously the problems created by industrialism. The complaints and demands and prophetic denunciations of the Populists stirred the latent liberalism in many Americans and startled many conservatives into a new flexibility. Most of the specific reforms

* Reprinted from *The Age of Reform*, with the permission of the publisher, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., copyright 1955 by Richard Hofstadter, and published on October 17. Extensive footnotes which are part of the chapter as it appears in the book have been omitted.

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in the Populist program proved in later years to be either harmless or useful. In at least one important area of American life a few Populist leaders in the South attempted something profoundly radical and humane—to build a popular movement that would cut across the old barriers of race—until persistent use of the Negro bogy distracted their following. To discuss the broad ideology of the Populists does them some injustice, for it was in their concrete programs that they added most constructively to our political life, and in their more general picture of the world that they were most credulous and vulnerable. Moreover, any account of the fallibility of Populist thinking that does not acknowledge the stress and suffering out of which that thinking emerged will be seriously remiss. But anyone who enlarges our portrait of the Populist tradition is likely to bring out some unseen blemishes. In the books that have been written about the Populist movement, only passing mention has been made of its significant provincialism; little has been said of its relations with nativism and nationalism; nothing has been said of its tincture of anti-Semitism.

The Populist impulse expressed itself in a body of notions that represent what I have called the "soft" side of agrarianism. These notions which appeared with regularity in the political literature, must be examined if we are to re-create for ourselves the Populist spirit. To extract them from the full context of the polemical writings in which they appeared is undoubtedly to oversimplify them; even to name them in any language that comes readily to the historian of ideas is perhaps to suggest that they had a formality and coherence that in reality they clearly lacked. But since it is less feasible to have no labels than to have somewhat too facile ones, we may enumerate the dominant themes in Populist ideology as these: the idea of a golden age; the concept of natural harmonies; the dualistic version of social struggles; the conspiracy theory of history; and the doctrine of the primacy of money. The last of these I will touch upon in connection with the free-silver issue. Here I propose to analyze the others, and to show how they were nurtured by the traditions of the agrarian myth.

THE UTOPIA OF THE POPULISTS was in the past, not the future. According to the agrarian myth, the health of the state was proportionate to the degree to which it was dominated by the agricultural class, and this assumption pointed to the superiority of an earlier age. The Populists looked backward with longing to the lost agrarian Eden, to the republican America of the early years of the nineteenth century in which there were few millionaires and, as they saw it, no beggars, when the laborer had excellent prospects and the farmer had abundance, when statesmen still responded to the mood of the people and there was no such thing as the money power. What they meant—though they did not express themselves in such terms—was that they would like to restore the conditions prevailing before the development of industrialism and the commercialization of agriculture. It should not be surprising that they inherited the traditions of Jacksonian democ-

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racy, that they revived the old Jacksonian cry: "Equal Rights for All, Special Privileges for None," or that most of the slogans of 1896 echoed the battle cries of 1836. General James B. Weaver, the Populist candidate for the presidency in 1892, was an old Democrat and Free-Soiler, born during the days of Jackson's battle with the United States Bank, who drifted into the Greenback movement after a short spell as a Republican, and from there to Populism. His book, *A Call to Action,* published in 1892, drew up an indictment of the business corporation which reads like a Jacksonian polemic. Even in those hopeful early days of the People's Party, Weaver projected no grandiose plans for the future, but lamented the course of recent history, the growth of economic oppression, and the emergence of great contrasts of wealth and poverty, and called upon his readers to do "All in [their] power to arrest the alarming tendencies of our times."

Nature, as the agrarian tradition had it, was beneficent. The United States was abundantly endowed with rich land and rich resources, and the "natural" consequence of such an endowment should be the prosperity of the people. If the people failed to enjoy prosperity, it must be because of a harsh and arbitrary intrusion of human greed and error. "Hard times, then," said one popular writer, "as well as the bankruptcies, enforced idleness, starvation, and the crime, misery, and moral degra dation growing out of conditions like the present, being unnatural, not in accordance with, or the result of any natural law, must be attributed to that kind of unwise and pernicious legislation which history proves to have produced similar results in all ages of the world. It is the mission of the age to correct these errors in human legislation, to adopt and establish policies and systems, in accord with, rather than in opposition to divine law." In assuming a lush natural order whose workings were being deranged by human laws, Populist writers were again drawing on the Jacksonian tradition, whose spokesmen also had pleaded for a proper obedience to "natural" laws as a prerequisite of social justice.

SOMEWHAT AKIN to the notion of the beneficence of nature was the idea of a natural harmony of interests among the productive classes. To the Populist mind there was no fundamental conflict between the farmer and the worker, between the toiling people and the small businessman. While there might be corrupt individuals in any group, the underlying interests of the productive majority were the same; predatory behavior existed only because it was initiated and underwritten by a small parasitic minority in the highest places of power. As opposed to the idea that society consists of a number of different and frequently clashing interests—the social pluralism expressed, for instance, by Madison in the *Federalist*—the Populists adhered, less formally to be sure, but quite persistently, to a kind of social dualism; although they knew perfectly well that society was composed of a number of classes, for all practical purposes only one simple division need be considered. There were two nations. "It is a struggle," said Sockless Jerry Simpson, "be-

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tween the robbers and the robbed." "There are but two sides in the conflict that is being waged in this country today," declared a Populist Manifesto. "On the one side are the allied hosts of monopolies, the money power, great trusts and railroad corporations, who seek the enactment of laws to benefit them and impoverish the people. On the other are the farmers, laborers, merchants, and all other people who produce wealth and bear the burdens of taxation. . . . Between these two there is no middle ground." "On the one side," said Bryan in his famous speech against the repeal of the Sherman Silver Purchase Act, "stand the corporate interests of the United States, the moneyed interests, aggregated wealth and capital, imperious, arrogant, compassionless. . . . On the other side stand an unnumbered throng, those who gave to the Democratic party a name and for whom it has assumed to speak." The people versus the interests, the public versus the plutocrats, the toiling multitude versus the money power—in various phrases this central antagonism was expressed. From this simple social classification it seemed to follow that once the techniques of misleading the people were exposed, victory over the money power ought to be easily accomplished, for in sheer numbers the people were overwhelming. "There is no power on earth that can defeat us," said General Weaver during the optimistic days of the campaign of 1892. "It is a fight between labor and capital, and labor is in the vast majority."

The problems that faced the Populists assumed a delusive simplicity: the victory over injustice, the solution for all social ills, was concentrated in the crusade against a single, relatively small but immensely strong, interest, the money power. "With the destruction of the money power," said Senator Peffer, "the death knell of gambling in grain and other commodities will be sounded; for the business of the worst men on earth will have been broken up, and the mainstay of the gamblers removed. It will be an easy matter, after the greater spoilsmen have been shorn of their power, to clip the wings of the little ones. Once we get rid of the men who hold the country by the throat, the parasites can be easily removed." Since the old political parties were the primary means by which the people were kept wandering in the wilderness, the People's Party advocates insisted, only a new and independent political party could do this essential job. As the silver question became more prominent and the idea of a third party faded, the need for a monolithic solution became transmuted into another form; there was only one *issue* upon which the money power could really be beaten and this was the money issue. "When we have restored the money of the Constitution," said Bryan in his Cross of Gold speech, "all other necessary reforms will be possible; but . . . until this is done there is no other reform that can be accomplished."

While the conditions of victory were thus made to appear simple, they did not always appear easy, and it would be misleading to imply that the tone of Populistic thinking was uniformly optimistic. Often, indeed, a deep-lying vein of anxiety showed through. The very sharpness of the struggle, as the Populists experienced it, the alleged absence

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of compromise solutions and of intermediate groups in the body politic, the brutality and desperation that was imputed to the plutocracy—all these suggested that failure of the people to win the final contest peacefully could result only in a total victory for the plutocrats and total extinction of democratic institutions, possibly after a period of bloodshed and anarchy. "We are nearing a serious crisis," declared Weaver. "If the present strained relations between wealth owners and wealth producers continue much longer they will ripen into frightful disaster. This universal discontent must be quickly interpreted and its causes removed." "We meet," said the Populist platform of 1892, "in the midst of a nation brought to the verge of moral, political, and material ruin. Corruption dominates the ballot-box, the Legislatures, the Congress, and touches even the ermine of the bench. The people are demoralized. . . . The newspapers are largely subsidized or muzzled, public opinion silenced, business prostrated, homes covered with mortgages, labor impoverished, and the land concentrating in the hands of the capitalists. The urban workmen are denied the right to organize for self-protection, imported pauperized labor beats down their wages, a hireling standing army, unrecognized by our laws, is established to shoot them down, and they are rapidly degenerating into European conditions. The fruits of the toil of millions are boldly stolen to build up colossal fortunes for a few, unprecedented in the history of mankind; and the possessors of these, in turn, despise the Republic and endanger liberty." Such conditions foreboded "the destruction of civilization, or the establishment of an absolute despotism."

The common fear of an impending apocalypse had its most striking articulation in Ignatius Donnelly's fantastic novel *Caesar's Column.* This book, published under a pseudonym, was a piece of visionary writing, possibly inspired by the success a few years earlier of Bellamy's utopian romance *Looking Backward,* which called forth a spate of imitators during the last decade of the century. Praised by leading members of the Populist movement and by persons as diverse as Cardinal Gibbons, George Cary Eggleston, Frances E. Willard, and Julian Hawthorne, *Caesar's Column* became one of the most widely read books of the early nineties. Donnelly's was different from the other utopias. Although in its anticlimactic conclusion it did describe a utopia in a remote spot in Africa, the main story portrayed a sadistic anti-utopia arrived at, as it were, by standing Bellamy on his head. The idea seems to have occurred to Donnelly in a moment of great discouragement at the close of the unusually corrupt Minnesota legislative session of 1889, when he was struck with the thought of what might come to be if the worst tendencies of current society were projected a century into the future. The story takes place in the year 1988, missing by four years the date of the more recent anti-utopia of George Orwell, with which it invites comparison, though not on literary grounds.

Donnelly's hero and narrator is a stranger, a shepherd of Swiss extraction living in the state of Uganda, Africa, who visits New York and reports his adventures in a series of letters. New York is a center

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of technological marvels much like Bellamy's. The stranger approaches it in an airship, finds it lit so brightly that its life goes on both night and day. Its streets are covered with roofs of glass; underneath them, bearing the city's subway system, run smokeless and noiseless electric trains to which passengers are brought by electric elevators. Its air-conditioned hotels are capped by roof-top restaurants serving incredible luxuries, where "star-eyed maidens . . . wander half seen amid the foliage, like the houris in the Mohammedan's heaven."

This sybaritic life, supported at the cost of great mass suffering, conceals a fierce social struggle. The world of 1988 is governed by an inner council of plutocratic leaders who stop at nothing to crush potential opposition. They keep in their hire a fleet of "Demons," operators of dirigibles carrying poison-gas bombs, whose aid they are ready to use at any sign of popular opposition. The people themselves have become equally ruthless—"brutality above had produced brutality below." The farmers are "no longer the honest yeomanry who had filled, in the old time, the armies of Washington, and Jackson, and Grant, and Sherman . . . but their brutalized descendants—fierce serfs—cruel and bloodthirsty peasants." The brunt of the social struggle, however, is borne by the urban laborers, a polyglot, silent mass of sullen, underfed humanity. The traveler from Uganda learns in a conversation (documented by Donnelly with real articles from current magazines) that as early as 1889 many writers had warned against the potentialities of this state of affairs. It was not an inevitable development, but greed and stupidity had kept the ruling classes from heeding such prophets of disaster. Rapacious business methods, the bribery of voters, the exploitation of workers and farmers by the plutocracy, had gone unchecked until the end of the nineteenth century, when the proletariat had rebelled. The rebellion had been put down by the farmers, not yet completely expelled by mortgage foreclosures from their position as property-owners and businessmen. Now that the farmers too are destroyed as a prop of the existing order, the rulers rely solely upon the bomb, the dirigible, and a mercenary army.

The convolutions of Donnelly's plot, which includes two tasteless love stories, do little more than entitle the book to be called a novel, and the work is full of a kind of suppressed lasciviousness that one finds often in popular writing of the period. At the climax of the story, the secret revolutionary organization, the Brotherhood of Destruction, after buying off the "Demons," revolts and begins an incredible round of looting and massacre which may have been modeled on the French Revolutionary Terror but makes it seem pale and bloodless in comparison. Some members of the governing class are forced to build a pyre on which they are then burned. There is so much carnage that the disposal of the bodies becomes an immense sanitary problem. Caesar, one of the three leaders (who is himself beheaded in the end), commands that the corpses be piled up and covered with cement to form a gigantic pyramidal column as a monument to the uprising. The city is finally burned, but a saving remnant of decent folk escapes in a

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dirigible to the African mountains, where under the guidance of an elite of intellectuals they form a Christian socialist state in which the Populist program for land, transportation, and finance becomes a reality and interest is illegal.

Doubtless this fantasy was meant to say what would happen if the warnings of the reformers and the discontents of the people went unheard and unalleviated. Far more ominous, however, than any of the vivid and hideous predictions of the book is the sadistic and nihilistic spirit in which it was written. It is perhaps a childish book, but in the middle of the twentieth century it seems anything but laughable: it affords a frightening glimpse into the ugly potential of frustrated popular revolt. When *Caesar's Column* appeared, the reform movement in America had not yet made a dent upon the torments and oppressions that were felt by a large portion of the people. In some men the situation fostered a feeling of desperation, and Donnelly's was a desperate work. It came at a moment when the threat of a social apocalypse seemed to many people not at all remote, and it remains even now a nettlesome if distinctly minor prophetic book.

II. History as Conspiracy

Both sides of Donnelly's struggle, the Council of governing plutocrats and the Brotherhood of Destruction, are significantly portrayed as secret organizations—this despite the fact that the Brotherhood has millions of members. There was something about the Populist imagination that loved the secret plot and the conspiratorial meeting. There was in fact a widespread Populist idea that all American history since the Civil War could be understood as a sustained conspiracy of the international money power.

The pervasiveness of this way of looking at things may be attributed to the common feeling that farmers and workers were not simply oppressed but oppressed deliberately, consciously, continuously, and with wanton malice by "the interests." It would of course be misleading to imply that the Populists stand alone in thinking of the events of their time as the results of a conspiracy. This kind of thinking frequently occurs when political and social antagonisms are sharp. Certain audiences are especially susceptible to it—particularly, I believe, those who have attained only a low level of education, whose access to information is poor, and who are so completely shut out from access to the centers of power that they feel themselves completely deprived of self-defense and subjected to unlimited manipulation by those who wield power. There are, moreover, certain types of popular movements of dissent that offer special opportunities to agitators with paranoid tendencies, who are able to make a vocational asset out of their psychic disturbances. Such persons have an opportunity to impose their own style of thought upon the movements they lead. It would of course be misleading to imply that there are no such things as conspiracies in history. Anything that partakes of political strategy may need, for a

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time at least, an element of secrecy, and is thus vulnerable to being dubbed conspiratorial. Corruption itself has the character of conspiracy. In this sense the Crédit Mobilier was a conspiracy, as was the Teapot Dome affair. If we tend to be too condescending to the Populists at this point, it may be necessary to remind ourselves that they had seen so much bribery and corruption, particularly on the part of the railroads, that they had before them a convincing model of the management of affairs through conspiratorial behavior. Indeed, what makes conspiracy theories so widely acceptable is that they usually contain a germ of truth. But there is a great difference between locating conspiracies *in* history and saying that history *is,* in effect, a conspiracy, between singling out those conspiratorial acts that do on occasion occur and weaving a vast fabric of social explanation out of nothing but skeins of evil plots.

When conspiracies do not exist it is necessary for those who think in this fashion to invent them. Among the most celebrated instances in modern history are the forging of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion and the grandiose fabrication under Stalin's regime of the Trotzkyite-Bukharinite-Zinovievite center. These inventions were cynical. In the history of American political controversy there is a tradition of conspiratorial accusations which seem to have been sincerely believed. Jefferson appears really to have believed, at one time, that the Federalists were conspiring to re-establish monarchy. Some Federalists believed that the Jeffersonians were conspiring to subvert Christianity. The movement to annex Texas and the war with Mexico were alleged by many Northerners to be a slaveholder's conspiracy. The early Republican leaders, including Lincoln, charged that there was a conspiracy on the part of Stephen A. Douglas to make slavery a nationwide institution. Such pre-Civil War parties as the Know-Nothing and Anti-Masonic movements were based almost entirely upon conspiratorial ideology. The Nye Committee, years ago, tried to prove that our entry into the first World War was the work of a conspiracy of bankers and munitions-makers. And now not only our entry into the second World War, but the entire history of the past twenty years or so is being given the color of conspiracy by the cranks and political fakirs of our own age.

Nevertheless, when these qualifications have been taken into account, it remains true that Populist thought showed an unusually strong tendency to account for relatively impersonal events in highly personal terms. An overwhelming sense of grievance does not find satisfactory expression in impersonal explanations except among those with a well-developed tradition of intellectualism. It is the city, after all, that is the home of intellectual complexity. The farmer lived in isolation from the great world in which his fate was actually decided. He was accused of being unusually suspicious, and certainly his situation, trying as it was, made thinking in impersonal terms difficult. Perhaps the rural middle-class leaders of Populism (this was a movement of farmers, but it was not led by farmers) had more to do than the farmer himself with the cast of Populist thinking. At any rate, Populist

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thought often carries one into a world in which the simple virtues and unmitigated villainies of a rural melodrama have been projected on a national and even an international scale. In Populist thought the farmer is not a speculating businessman, victimized by the risk economy of which he is a part, but rather a wounded yeoman, preyed upon by those who are alien to the life of folkish virtue. A villain was needed, marked with the unmistakable stigmata of the villains of melodrama, and the more remote he was from the familiar scene, the more plausibly his villainies could be exaggerated.

It was not enough to say that a conspiracy of the money power against the common people was going on. It had been going on ever since the Civil War. It was not enough to say that it stemmed from Wall Street. It was international: it stemmed from Lombard Street. In his preamble to the People's Party platform of 1892, a succinct, official expression of Populist views, Ignatius Donnelly asserted: "A vast conspiracy against mankind has been organized on two continents, and it is rapidly taking possession of the world. If not met and overthrown at once it forbodes terrible social convulsions, the destruction of civilization, or the establishment of an absolute despotism." A manifesto of 1895, signed by fifteen outstanding leaders of the People's Party, declared: "As early as 1865-66 a conspiracy was entered into between the gold gamblers of Europe and America. . . . For nearly thirty years these conspirators have kept the people quarreling over less important matters while they have pursued with unrelenting zeal their one central purpose. . . . Every device of treachery, every resource of statecraft, and every artifice known to the secret cabals of the international gold ring are being made use of to deal a blow to the prosperity of the people and the financial and commercial independence of the country."

The financial argument behind the conspiracy theory was simple enough. Those who owned bonds wanted to be paid not in a common currency but in gold, which was at a premium; those who lived by lending money wanted as high a premium as possible to be put on their commodity by increasing its scarcity. The panics, depressions, and bankruptcies caused by their policies only added to their wealth; such catastrophes offered opportunities to engross the wealth of others through business consolidations and foreclosures. Hence the interests relished and encouraged hard times. The Greenbackers had long since popularized this argument, insisting that an adequate legal-tender currency would break the monopoly of the "Shylocks." Their demand for $50 of circulating medium per capita, still in the air when the People's Party arose, was rapidly replaced by the less "radical" demand for free coinage of silver. But what both the Greenbackers and free-silverites held in common was the idea that the contraction of currency was a deliberate squeeze, the result of a long-range plot of the "Anglo-American Gold Trust." Wherever one turns in the literature of the nineties one can find this conspiracy theory expressed. It is in the Populist newspapers, the proceedings of the silver conventions,

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the immense pamphlet literature broadcast by the American Bimetallic League, the Congressional debates over money; it is elaborated in such popular books as Mrs. E. E. V. Emery's *Seven Financial Conspiracies which have Enslaved the American People* or Gordon Clark's *Shylock: as Banker, Bondholder, Corruptionist, Conspirator.*

Mrs. Emery's book, first published in 1887, and dedicated to "the enslaved people of a dying republic," achieved great circulation, especially among the Kansas Populists. According to Mrs. Emery, the United States had been an economic Garden of Eden in the period before the Civil War. The fall of man had dated from the war itself, when "the money kings of Wall Street" determined that they could take advantage of the wartime necessities of their fellow men by manipulating the currency. "Controlling it, they could inflate or depress the business of the country at pleasure, they could send the warm life current through the channels of trade, dispensing peace, happiness, and prosperity, or they could check its flow, and completely paralyze the industries of the country." With this great power for good in their hands, the Wall Street men preferred to do evil. Lincoln's war policy of issuing greenbacks presented them with the dire threat of an adequate supply of currency. So the Shylocks gathered in convention and "perfected" a conspiracy to create a demand for their gold. The remainder of the book was a recital of a series of seven measures passed between 1862 and 1875 which were alleged to be a part of this continuing conspiracy, the total effect of which was to contract the currency of the country further and further until finally it squeezed the industry of the country like a hoop of steel.

Mrs. Emery's rhetoric left no doubt of the sustained purposefulness of this scheme—described as "villainous robbery," and as having been "secured through the most soulless strategy." She was most explicit about the so-called "crime of 1873," the demonetization of silver, giving a fairly full statement of the standard greenback-silverite myth concerning that event. As they had it, an agent of the Bank of England, Ernest Seyd by name, had come to the United States in 1872 with $500,000 with which he had bought enough support in Congress to secure the passage of the demonetization measure. This measure was supposed greatly to have increased the value of American four per cent bonds held by British capitalists by making it necessary to pay them in gold only. To it Mrs. Emery attributed the panic of 1873, its bankruptcies, and its train of human disasters: "Murder, insanity, suicide, divorce, drunkenness and all forms of immorality and crime have increased from that day to this in the most appalling ratio."

"Coin" Harvey, the author of the most popular single document of the whole currency controversy, *Coin's Financial School,* also published a novel, *A Tale of Two Nations,* in which the conspiracy theory of history was incorporated into a melodramatic tale. In this story the powerful English banker Baron Rothe plans to bring about the demonetization of silver in the United States, in part for his own aggrandizement but also to prevent the power of the United States from outstrip-

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ping that of England. He persuades an American Senator (probably John Sherman, the *bête noire* of the silverites) to co-operate in using British gold in a campaign against silver. To be sure that the work is successful, he also sends to the United States a relative and ally, one Rogasner, who stalks through the story like the villains in the plays of Dion Boucicault, muttering to himself such remarks as "I am here to destroy the United States—Cornwallis could not have done more. For the wrongs and insults, for the glory of my own country, I will bury the knife deep into the heart of this nation." Against the plausibly drawn background of the corruption of the Grant administration, Rogasner proceeds to buy up the American Congress and suborn American professors of economics to testify for gold. He also falls in love with a proud American beauty, but his designs on her are foiled because she loves a handsome young silver Congressman from Nebraska who bears a striking resemblance to William Jennings Bryan!

ONE FEATURE OF THE POPULIST CONSPIRACY theory generally overlooked is its frequent link with a kind of rhetorical anti-Semitism. The slight current of anti-Semitism that existed in the United States before the 1890's had been associated with problems of money and credit. During the closing years of the century it grew noticeably. While the jocose and rather heavy-handed anti-Semitism that can be found in Henry Adams's letters of the 1890's shows that this prejudice existed outside the Populist literature, it was chiefly Populist writers who expressed that identification of the Jew with the usurer and the "international gold ring" which was the central theme of the American anti-Semitism of the age. The omnipresent symbol of Shylock can hardly be taken in itself as evidence of anti-Semitism, but the frequent references to the House of Rothschild make it clear that for many silverites the Jew was an organic part of the conspiracy theory of history. Coin Harvey's Baron Rothe was clearly meant to be Rothschild; his Rogasner (Ernest Seyd?) was a dark figure out of the coarsest anti-Semitic tradition. "You are very wise in your way," Rogasner is told at the climax of the tale, "the commercial way, inbred through generations. The politic, scheming, devious way, inbred through generations also." One of the cartoons in the effectively illustrated *Coin's Financial School* showed a map of the world dominated by the tentacles of an octopus at the site of the British Isles, labeled: "Rothschilds." In Populist demonology, anti-Semitism, Anglophobia went hand in hand.

The strain of anti-Semitism, often recognizable in the physical stereotypes used in cartoons, was sounded openly in the silver campaign. A representative of the New Jersey Grange, for instance, did not hesitate to warn the members of the Second National Silver Convention of 1892 to watch out for political candidates who represented "Wall Street, and the Jews of Europe." Mary E. Lease described Grover Cleveland as "the agent of Jewish bankers and British gold." Donnelly represented the leader of the governing Council of plutocrats in *Caesar's Column,* one Prince Cabano, as a powerful Jew, born Jacob

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Isaacs; one of the triumvirate who led the Brotherhood of Destruction is also an exiled Russian Jew, who flees from the apocalyptic carnage with a hundred million dollars which he intends to use to "revive the ancient splendors of the Jewish race, in the midst of the ruins of the world." One of the more elaborate documents of the conspiracy school traced the power of the Rothschilds over America to a transaction between Hugh McCulloch, Secretary of the Treasury under Lincoln and Johnson, and Baron James Rothschild. "The most direful part of this business between Rothschild and the United States Treasury was not the loss of money, even by hundreds of millions. It was the resignation of the country itself INTO THE HANDS OF ENGLAND, as England had long been resigned into the hands of HER JEWS."

Such rhetoric, which became common currency in the movement, later passed beyond Populism into the larger stream of political protest. By the time the campaign of 1896 arrived, an Associated Press reporter noticed as "one of the striking things" about the Populist convention at St. Louis "the extraordinary hatred of the Jewish race. It is not possible to go into any hotel in the city without hearing the most bitter denunciation of the Jews as a class and of the particular Jews who happen to have prospered in the world." This report may have been somewhat overdone, but the identification of the silver cause with anti-Semitism did become close enough for Bryan to have to pause in the midst of his campaign to explain to the Jewish Democrats of Chicago that in denouncing the policies of the Rothschilds he and his silver friends were "not attacking a race; we are attacking greed and avarice which know no race or religion."

It would be easy to misstate the character of Populist anti-Semitism or to exaggerate its intensity. To speak of anti-Semitism in the post-Hitler world is to raise the specter of the Nazis and the final horror of the gas chambers, which is a far cry from the anti-Semitism of the Populists. For Populist anti-Semitism was altogether abstract. It was a mode of expression, a rhetorical style, not a tactic or a program. It did not lead to exclusion laws, much less to riots or pogroms. There were, after all, relatively few Jews in the United States in the late 1880's and early 1890's, most of them remote from the areas of Populist strength. It is one thing, however, to say that this prejudice did not go beyond a certain symbolic usage, quite another to say that a people's choice of symbols is of no significance. Populist anti-Semitism does have its importance—chiefly as a symptom of a certain ominous credulity in the Populist mind. It is not too much to say that the Greenback-Populist tradition activated most of what we have of modern popular anti-Semitism in the United States. From Thaddeus Stevens and Coin Harvey to Father Coughlin, and from Brooks and Henry Adams to Ezra Pound, there has been a curiously persistent linkage between anti-Semitism and money and credit obsessions. A full history of modern anti-Semitism in the United States would reveal, I believe, its substantial Populist lineage, but it may be sufficient to point out here that neither the informal connection between Bryan and the Klan in the

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twenties nor Thomas E. Watson's conduct in the Leo Frank case were altogether fortuitous. And Henry Ford's notorious anti-Semitism of the 1920's, along with his hatred of "Wall Street," were the foibles of a Michigan farm boy who had been liberally exposed to Populist notions.

III. The Spirit Militant

The conspiratorial theory and the associated Anglophobic and Judophobic feelings were part of a larger complex of fear and suspicion of the stranger that haunted, and still tragically haunts, the nativist American mind. This feeling, though hardly confined to Populists and Bryanites, was none the less exhibited by them in a particularly virulent form. Everyone remote and alien was distrusted and hated—even Americans, if they happened to be city people. The old agrarian conception of the city as the home of moral corruption reached a new pitch. Chicago was bad; New York, which housed the Wall Street bankers, was farther away and worse; London was still farther away and still worse. This traditional distrust grew stronger as the cities grew larger, and as they filled with immigrant aliens. As early as 1885 the Kansas preacher Josiah Strong had published *Our Country,* a book widely read in the West, in which the cities were discussed as a great problem of the future, much as though they were some kind of monstrous malignant growths on the body politic. Hamlin Garland recalled that when he first visited Chicago, in the late 1880's, having never seen a town larger than Rockford, Illinois, he naturally assumed that it swarmed with thieves. "If the city is miles across," he wondered, "how am I to get from the railway station to my hotel without being assaulted?" While such extreme fears could be quieted by some contact with the city, others were actually confirmed—especially when the farmers were confronted with city prices. Nativist prejudices were equally aroused by immigration, for which urban manufacturers, with their insatiable demand for labor, were blamed. "We have become the world's melting pot," wrote Thomas E. Watson. "The scum of creation has been dumped on us. Some of our principal cities are more foreign than American. The most dangerous and corrupting hordes of the Old World have invaded us. The vice and crime which they have planted in our midst are sickening and terrifying. What brought these Goths and Vandals to our shores? The manufacturers are mainly to blame. They wanted cheap labor: and they didn't care a curse how much harm to our future might be the consequence of their heartless policy."

Anglo-Saxons, whether Populist or patrician, found it difficult to accept other peoples on terms of equality or trust. They were objects to be manipulated—benevolently, it was often said, but none the less firmly. Mary E. Lease, that authentic voice of inland Populism who became famous for advising farmers to "raise less corn and more hell," wrote a book in 1895 under the ingratiating title: *The Problem of Civilization Solved,* in which these characteristics were rather ingenu-

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ously displayed. According to Mrs. Lease, Europe and America stood on the brink of one of two immense catastrophes—a universal reign of anarchistic terror or the establishment of a world-wide Russian despotism. The only hope of averting this catastrophe was, as she put it, "the most stupendous migration of races the world has ever known, and thereby relieve the congested centers of the world's population of half their inhabitants and provide Free Homes for half of mankind." She proposed a vast reshuffling of peoples in which the tropics in both hemispheres be taken over by white planters with Negroes and Orientals as "tillers of the soil." "Through all the vicissitudes of time, the Caucasian has arisen to the moral and intellectual supremacy of the world, until now this favored race is fitted for the *Stewardship of the Earth and Emancipation from Manual Labor.*" This stewardship, far from being an imposition on the lesser breeds without the law, would be an act of mercy; it would take the starved and miserable ryots and coolies of the world and by giving them management and supervision provide them with the means of life, as well as rescue them from paganism. Such a change they would "hail with joy."

The proposal for colonization under government supervision and with governmental subsidies was supplemented by a grand plan for what Mrs. Lease candidly called the partitioning of the world, in which the Germanic and Latin peoples would be united into two racial confederations, and the British and Russian empires checked and neutralized by other powerful states. The role of the United States in this world was to be the head of the federated American republics. Canada should be annexed—so also Cuba, Haiti, Santo Domingo, and Hawaii. The Latin republics would be fertile fields for colonization by the surplus population of the United States—which no longer had a public domain to give its citizens—and the North Americans would import "vast swarms of Asiatics as laborers for the plantations." Mrs. Lease felt that the Latins, like the Asiatics, would certainly benefit from this and that they ought to like it. Moreover, they owed the United States a debt of gratitude: "We stand, and have stood for years, ready to extend our blood and treasure in defense of Latin America against European aggression. Can they not *reciprocate* by giving us the leadership on this continent? If not, we should take it! We should follow the example of European nations and annex all we can and establish protectorates wherever possible in America."

Mrs. Lease's book, the work of a naive but imaginative mind driven to the pitch of its powers by an extraordinary capacity for suspicion, was hardly as representative or popular as *Coin's Financial School* or *Caesar's Column,* but its author was one of the indigenous products of Populist political culture. Mrs. Lease's peculiar ideas of *Weltpolitik,* her particular solution of tropical colonization, were not common currency in Populist thinking. But other assumptions in her book could be found among the Populists with great frequency—the smug assumption of Anglo-Saxon superiority and benevolence, the sense of a need for some new area of expansion, the hatred of England, the fear of

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Russia, the anxiety over the urban masses as a potential source of anarchy.

The nationalist fervor of Mrs. Lease's book also represents one side of a curiously ambiguous aspect of Populism. On the surface there was a strong note of anti-militarism and anti-imperialism in the Populist movement and Bryan democracy. Populists were opposed to large standing armies and large naval establishments; most of them supported Bryan's resistance to acquisition of the Philippines. They looked upon the military as a threat to democracy, upon imperialist acquisitions as gains only to financiers and "monarchists," not to the people. But what they chiefly objected to was institutional militarism rather than war itself, imperialism rather than jingoism. Under a patina of pacifist rhetoric they were profoundly nationalistic and bellicose. What the nativist mind most resolutely opposed was not so much war itself as co-operation with European governments for any ends at all. Those who have been puzzled in our own time by the anti-European attitudes of men like Senator Taft and General MacArthur, and by their alternating espousal of dangerously aggressive and near-pacifist (or anti-militarist) policies, will find in the Populist mentality a suggestive precedent.

The Populists distinguished between wars for humanity and wars of conquest. The first of these were, of course, legitimate, but the power of the Populists to discriminate between the two was not strong, and they were quite ready to be ballyhooed into a righteous war, as the Cuban situation was to show. During the early nineteenth century popular sentiment in the United States, especially within the democratic camp, had been strong for the republican movements in Europe and Latin America. With the coming of the nineties and the great revulsion against the outside world, the emphasis was somewhat changed; where sympathy with oppressed and revolutionary peoples had been the dominant sentiment in the past, the dominant sentiment now seemed rather to be hatred of their governments. That there must always be such an opposition between peoples and governments the Populist mind did not like to question, and even the most democratic governments of Europe were persistently looked upon as though they were nothing but reactionary monarchies.

After the success of *Caesar's Column,* Donnelly wrote another fantasy called *The Golden Bottle,* in which this antagonism had a vivid expression. The first part of the story need not detain us: it deals with the life of one Ephraim Benezet of Kansas who is given a bottle that empowers him to turn iron into gold, a windfall which not surprisingly makes it possible for him to solve his own and the country's financial problems. Before long he is elected President, and after foiling a plot to kill him and checking a bankers' conspiracy to start a civil war, he delivers an extraordinary inaugural message. The one thing that prevents the American people, he tells them, from rising "to still higher levels of greatness and happiness" is the Old World. America is "united by a ligament to a corpse—Europe!" This opens an appeal to close the gates against further wretched immigrants from Europe who will

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be used by American capitalists to beat down the wages of American workingmen. "We could, by wise laws and just conditions, lift up the toilers of our own country to the level of the middle classes, but a vast multitude of the miserable of other lands clung to their skirts and dragged them down. Our country was the safety-valve which permitted the discontent of the Old World to escape. If that vent was closed, every throne in Europe would be blown up in twenty years. . . . For the people of the Old World, having to choose between death by starvation and resistance to tyrants, would turn upon their oppressors and tear them to pieces." There follows an appeal to the peoples of Europe to revolt against their rulers. The countries of Europe respond by declaring war, and in the great international conflict that follows, the United States comes to Europe as an invading liberator. President Benezet wins, of course, and frees even the Russians simply by making them literate. He also establishes a world government to keep the peace.

It is no coincidence, then, that Populism and jingoism grew together in the United States during the 1890's. The rising mood of intolerant nationalism was a nationwide thing, certainly not confined to the regions of Populist strength; but among no stratum of the population was it stronger than among the Populists. Moreover it was on jingoist issues that the Populist and Bryanite sections of the country, with the aid of the yellow press and many political leaders, achieved that rapport with the masses of the cities which they never succeeded in getting on economic issues. Even conservative politicians sensed that, whatever other grounds of harmony were lacking between themselves and the populace of the hinterland, grounds for unity could be found in war.

The first, and for the Populists the preferred, enemy would have been England, the center of the gold power. *Coin's Financial School* closed with a bitter philippic against England: "If it is claimed we must adopt for our money the metal England selects, and can have no independent choice in the matter, let us make the test and find out if it is true. It is not American to give up without trying. If it is true, let us attach England to the United States and blot her name out from among the nations of the earth. A war with England would be the most popular ever waged on the face of the earth . . . the most just war ever waged by man." Some leaders of the Republican Party, which had attempted to appease the powerful silver sentiment in 1890 by passing the Sherman Silver Purchase Act, made a strategic move in the troubled year of 1894 to capture Western sentiment. On May 2 there opened in London an unofficial bimetallic conference in which American bimetallists were represented by Brooks Adams and Senator Wolcott of Colorado; fifteen prominent Senators, including outstanding Republicans, cabled their endorsement of international bimetallism. Senator Lodge proposed in the Senate to blackmail Britain by passing a discriminatory tariff against her if she did not consent to a bimetallic plan, a scheme nicely calculated to hold in line some of the Western silverite jingoes and Anglophobes.

This proposal was defeated by the Cleveland Democrats, but the

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Democratic Party's turn to make capital out of jingo sentiment came the next year with the excessively belligerent conduct of the Venezuela affair, one of the few really popular moves of the Cleveland administration. A west-coast newspaper spoke for many Americans when it said: "We are at the mercy of England, as far as our finances go, and (war) is our only way out." "War would be a good thing even if we got whipped," declared the Silver Senator from Nevada, William M. Stewart, "for it would rid us of English bank rule." And one Congressman from a strong Populist state wrote to congratulate Olney for having spiked the guns of Populism and anarchism with his vigorous diplomacy. Olney was similarly urged by the American consul in Havana to identify the administration and the sound-money Democrats with a strong policy of mediation or intervention in the war in Cuba; it would either get credit for stopping the atrocities, for buying Cuba, if that was the outcome, or for "fighting a successful war, if war there be. In the latter case, the enthusiasm, the applications for service, the employment of many of the unemployed, might do much towards directing the minds of the people from imaginary ills, the relief of which is erroneously supposed to be reached by 'Free Silver.' "

When the Venezuela matter was settled, the attention of jingoes turned toward Cuba. The situation of the oppressed Cubans was one with which the Populist element in the country could readily identify themselves, and they added their voice to the general cry throughout the country for an active policy of intervention. After the defeat of Bryan, popular frustration in the silver areas, blocked on domestic issues, seemed to find expression in the Cuban question. Here at least was a point at which the goldbugs could be vanquished. Neither the big business and banking community nor the Cleveland and McKinley administrations had much sympathy with the crusading fever that pervaded the country at large, and there were bitter mutual recriminations between conservative and Populist papers. Wall Street was accused of a characteristic indifference to the interests of humanity; the Populists in return were charged with favoring war as a cover under which they could smuggle in an inflationary policy. One thing seems clear: "most of the leading Congressional backers of intervention in Cuba represented southern and western states where Populism and silver were strongest." And it appears that one of the reasons why McKinley was advised by many influential Republicans to yield to the popular demand for war was the common fear, still meaningful in 1898, that the Democrats would go into the next presidental election with the irresistible slogan of Free Silver and Free Cuba as its battle cry. Jingoism was confined to no class, section, or party; but the Populist areas stood in the vanguard, and their pressure went far to bring about a needless war. When the war was over, the economic and emotional climate in which their movement had grown no longer existed, and their forces were scattered and confused. A majority of them, after favoring war, attempted honorably to spurn the fruits of war by taking up the cause of anti-imperialism. Thomas E. Watson, one of the few

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Populists who had consistently opposed the war, later insisted that "The Spanish War finished us. The blare of the bugle drowned the voice of the reformer." The cause of reform was, in fact, too mercurial to be permanently crushed by a short war; but, for the moment, Free Cuba had displaced Free Silver in public interest, and when reform raised its head again, it had a new face.

As we review these aspects of Populist emotion, an odd parallel obtrudes itself. Where else in American thought during this period do we find this militancy and nationalism, these apocalyptic forebodings and drafts of world-political strategies, this hatred of big businessmen, bankers, and trusts, these fears of immigrants and urban workmen, even this occasional toying with anti-Semitic rhetoric? We find them, curiously enough, most conspicuous among a group of men who are in all obvious respects the antithesis of the Populists. During the late 1880's and the '90's there emerged in the Eastern United States a small imperialist elite representing, in general, the same type that had once been Mugwumps, whose spokesmen were such solid and respectable gentlemen as Henry and Brooks Adams, Theodore Roosevelt, Henry Cabot Lodge, John Hay, and Albert J. Beveridge. While the silverites were raging openly and earnestly against the bankers and the Jews, Brooks and Henry Adams were expressing in their sardonic and morosely cynical private correspondence the same feelings, and acknowledging with bemused irony their kinship at this point with the mob. While Populist Congressmen and newspapers called for war with England or Spain, Roosevelt and Lodge did the same, and while Mrs. Lease projected her grandiose schemes of world partition and tropical colonization, men like Roosevelt, Lodge, Beveridge, and Mahan projected more realistic plans for the conquest of markets and the annexation of territory. While Populist readers were pondering over Donnelly's apocalyptic fantasies, Brooks and Henry Adams were also bemoaning the approaching end of their type of civilization, and even the characteristically optimistic T. R. could share at moments in "Brooks Adams' gloomiest anticipations of our gold-ridden, capitalist-bestridden, usurer-mastered future." Not long after Mrs. Lease wrote that "we need a Napoleon in the industrial world who, by agitation and education, will lead the people to a realizing sense of their condition and the remedies," Roosevelt and Brooks Adams talked about the threat of the eight-hour movement and the danger that the country would be "enslaved" by the organizers of the trusts, and played with the idea that Roosevelt might eventually lead "some great outburst of the emotional classes which should at least temporarily crush the Economic Man."

Not only were the gentlemen of this imperialist elite better read and better fed than the Populists, but they despised them. This strange convergence of unlike social elements on similar ideas has its explanation, I believe, in this: both the imperialist elite and the Populists had been bypassed and humiliated by the advance of industrialism, and

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both were rebelling against the domination of the country by industrial and financial capitalists. The gentlemen wanted the power and status they felt due them, which had been taken away from their class and type by the *arriviste* manufacturers and railroaders and the all-too-potent banking houses. The Populists wanted a restoration of agrarian profits and popular government. Both elements found themselves impotent and deprived in an industrial culture and balked by a common enemy. On innumerable matters they disagreed, but both were strongly nationalist, and amid the despairs and anxieties of the nineties both became ready for war if that would unseat or even embarrass the moneyed powers, or better still if it would topple the established political structure and open new opportunities for the leaders of disinherited farmers or for ambitious clubmen. But if there seems to be in this situation any suggestion of a forerunner or analogue of modern authoritarian movements, led by restless politicians and followed by a discontented but essentially conservative agrarian populace, it should by no means be exaggerated. The age was more innocent and more fortunate than ours, and by comparison with the grimmer realities of the twentieth century many of the events of the nineties take on a comic-opera quality. What came in the end was only a small war and a quick victory; when the farmers and the gentlemen finally did coalesce in politics, they produced only the genial reforms of Progressivism; and the man on the white horse turned out to be just a graduate of the Harvard boxing squad, equipped with an immense bag of platitudes, and quite willing to play the democratic game.

President Asks for Bread and Is Given a Stone . . .

(AP report from Denver):

. . . In the music field, Gen. Eisenhower particularly asked for recordings of the symphony works of Brahms and Bach . . .

The selections played for the President included soft chamber music and some old favorites.

Among the numbers were de Bussy's (sic) "Clair de Lune," "serene" (sic) by Drigo, "Festival," "Flirtation Waltz," "In the Still of the Night," "Star Dust," "Moonlight and Roses," "By a Sleepy Lagoon," "Indian Summer," and "Evening Song." . . . recorded by the Melachrino String Orchestra . . .

Included among others were . . . "Caucasian Love Song," "L'Amour, Toutours (sic) L'Amour," "Songs My Mother Taught Me," and a medley from "The Student Prince." . . . "One Alone," "Time on My Hands," "Deep in My Heart, Dear," and "Will You Remember?"

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AMERICAN NOTEBOOK Some Brief Comments On the Domestic Scene

1. The CIO Faces Automation

Gabriel Kolko

One of the most singular advantages we derive from machinery is in the check which it affords against the inattention, idleness, or the knavery of human agents.

CHARLES BABBAGE, *The Economy of Machinery*, 1832.

The unequivocal statement can be made that creative talents can't be automatized. But the operations analyst doesn't find man actually called upon for creative ability in manufacturing operations. The analyst is willing to go farther and say that man's creative desire is a troublesome factor when man acts on the basis of creative ability in lieu of following instructions.

PHILIP R. MARVIN in *Automation*, April 1954.

From 1947 to 1953 the output of the electronics industry in the United States increased 275 per cent. Over the same period employment of labor in the industry increased only 40 per cent. At the end of 1954, when electronics production was about equal to the peak of 1953, nine per cent fewer workers were employed and the average work week had fallen almost an hour. Commenting on the situation last March, Al Hartnett, secretary-treasurer of the International Union of Electrical Workers, CIO told his membership that while it could be a boon, automation also offered the possibility of " . . . a disaster of the first magnitude."

The CIO Oil Workers, surveying the impact of automation on the industry, dolefully reported that while refinery production rose 22 per cent from 1948 to April, 1954, the number of production workers had fallen from 147,000 to 137,000. Joseph Beirne, CIO Communication Workers' president, reported in April that mechanization on the operating end of the telephone industry had eliminated some 17,000 jobs in 1954 alone. Describing the trend, Hartnett of IUE declared: "automation is not merely an extension of machine production. It is instead as great a revolution as machine production itself. While machine production displaces some

An article by Gabriel Kolko discussing other aspects of automation, "Nobody Wants to Seem Defeatist—*Publicly*," appeared in the July 11 *New Republic*.

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workers, automation could displace MOST workers."

Such dramatic examples, recently given increasing publicity, have aroused the unions to the problems of the "era of automation." One man doing the work of 100 for Raytheon, or 35 for Chrysler, or 15 for Dow has, despite its exaggeration when abstracted from a total plant process, shaken the organized labor movement into a concern for the possible social and economic consequences of automation.

Until the CIO sponsored its National Conference on Automation in Washington last April, union activities in the field were sparse. Several international unions, faced with declining employment due to technological innovation, had already investigated the situations within their industries. UAW and CIO convention resolutions advocating preventive economic measures they would undoubtedly have sponsored anyway, and, above all, the need for further study, figured in with several pronouncements on the topic by Walter Reuther. When Secretary of Commerce Sinclair Weeks attacked "scaremongers" and "bogeymen of automation" in March, Reuther took it as an affront to the UAW and American people and brought automation to the headlines with the demand for an apology. With it he sent Secretary Weeks a copy of a special UAW pamphlet on automation which, amid illustrations of metal men designed by an imaginative artist, included the UAW's immediate program to counteract the negative social consequences of automation. It also included reference, for those desiring more information, to Norbert Wiener's cryptic and now complacent *The Human Use of Human Beings* and Karel Capek's science fiction drama, *R. U. R.* Both the UAW and CIO assigned special staff members to keep tabs on developments in the field, but the UAW's James Stern frankly admitted last April that he could give no answers to the problems of automation, and that those he had seen so far were " . . . a lot of speculation based on little knowledge."

The CIO's April conference represented the first major attempt to end the conjecture and shed light on automation. John Diebold, editor of industry's *Automatic Control,* told the conferees " . . . automation holds no threat to our economy. By giving us enormously increased productivity, on the contrary, it promises to invigorate it." Donald Campbell, Massachusetts Institute of Technology engineer, sounded a similar note, and Georgia Tech economist Walter S. Buckingham, Jr., consoled "that the longrun, over-all outlook for labor as a result of automation is good." Somewhat disappointed by the inability of experts to provide it with a more concrete portrait of the automated future, the CIO continues to lack the assurance and optimism of certainty. Automation remains an ominous question mark, and American labor seems willing to entertain more imagination in solving it than any other social or economic issue of the past decade.

I

The guaranteed annual wage is the most essential of the CIO's present answers to automation. In addition to preventing seasonal layoffs in such industries as auto which regularly suffer from the problem, discouraging mass layoffs of workers in old plants after constructing new ones, and guaranteeing forty hours' pay to a worker for each week he is called in, the

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GAW, as the UAW initially proposed it, is essentially an attempt to extend and enlarge unemployment compensation to 52 weeks. State payments are to be supplemented by the company to the extent of providing any workers with two or more years seniority the equivalent of a 40-hour-a-week pay check for a full year. The company would be liable to pay out a maximum of eight per cent of its current payroll during unemployment, and the UAW wants a reserve fund of 20 per cent of the base payrolls to be accumulated over a five-year period to cover any additional payments not provided for by the current tax on payrolls.

There are questionable elements in the plan, however, and the CIO has given no indication whether it is even quietly conscious of them. The GAW depends on the state unemployment compensation system, which in March, 1954 contained, after paying out generally low payments to a relatively small number of unemployed for a short time, a total national reserve of $8.6 billion, or a very small fraction of the income which would be lost if unemployment of any magnitude or length existed. The amount produced by an eight per cent tax on current payrolls has huge variable possibilities, and is very much dependent on the extent of unemployment. If a depression of the intensity of any period of the 1930s existed, the CIO realizes, as simple calculation dictates it must, that both the state and company systems would be hard pressed to maintain payments. And automation holds out, the CIO is willing to admit, the possibility of just such unemployment. If the unemployment lasts beyond a year (in early 1954 a fifth of the workers collecting compensation used up their benefits after 26 weeks) the worker is on his own. One CIO staff member has privately admitted that with automation all the GAW may turn out to be is a glorified severance pay scheme.

The CIO also knows the GAW has made it a distinct economic advantage for companies simply to introduce more automation rather than hire new workers to whom it might have to pay future GAW payments. In a sense, therefore, the GAW becomes a scheme to provide for workers already employed, and not those about to enter the labor market, shifting from other depressed industries, or out of unemployment payments. The classic role of labor increasing the nation's industrial productivity by pricing itself as highly as possible, and hence stimulating the innovation of labor saving devices, has proceeded on the assumption that machines create more jobs than they displace—and promise increasing prosperity for all. In the context of automation's ability to displace labor, the theory is ready for basic reappraisal along with many other traditional beliefs.

The idea of a shorter work week would also present several major problems under automation. First, it does not answer the problem of the displacement of traditional skills altogether, which will be discussed later. There is secondly the fact that a floor has to be placed on the extent to which a work week can be cut, since the trend in its decline has been geometric and not arithmetic, and to cut 25 hours off the work week within a generation or so, as we did from 1870 to 1950, leaves about a 15-hour work week. And thirdly, the experience of unions with the 36-hour week has been anything but happy. In Akron the rubber shops have been on a six-hour shift for nearly two

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decades, and a third of the rubber workers today hold two jobs, many in the rubber plants. Given general instability and insecurity in the economy, the shorter work week could conceivably mean the appropriation of many jobs by those anxious to earn more while they can.

But it is in the realm of demands it cannot negotiate at the bargaining table that the CIO has suggested its most far reaching, and probably relevant, program. As Walter Reuther has put it, it is a program that " . . will help to assure a stabilized reservoir of purchasing power during the transition years that seem to lie ahead." An extensive public works program, improved social security and minimum wage laws, and, above all, the need for stronger progressive taxation and wage increases to distribute purchasing power so consumption can keep up with productivity increases, are the key CIO demands. Yet the CIO, besides giving this aspect of its answer to automation the least attention, has failed to describe the means by which it hopes to get this program implemented.

II

There has arisen a general consensus, both among business and labor economists, that workers under automation will pass from the direct production lines to maintenance functions, and will still be needed to keep automatic machinery in operating order. "The typical auto worker of the future may be a skilled maintenance man, engineer, or analyst" declares the UAW in its pamphlet on the topic. "The biggest single management job in the factory of the future will be the selection and coordination of the activities of highly trained specialists . . . " writes industry's *Factory Management and Maintenance*. The underlying assumption in both cases is that the reallocation of manpower, and not unemployment, will present automation's most serious problem.

The general experience in highly automated plants until now has been that the over-all amounts of labor required has been radically reduced, but that the proportion of maintenance workers to whatever labor is needed is much higher than previously. The Dow Chemical Company's highly automatic Madison, Illinois, magnesium mill has about 400 production workers, of which an unusually large ratio of 35 per cent is involved in maintenance functions. Yet the average amount of capital investment for each production worker in the Dow plant is still eleven times greater than the average in all U. S. industry. Ford, by a program of standardized tools, has reduced its maintenance problems to a minimum. Automatic control boards indicate when tools should be replaced, thereby cutting down labor needs and preventing serious repair problems. Inspection by automatic gauging and similar devices has cut down the need for labor in quality control.

Indeed, the speed of processes in automatic factories has simply tended to demand more machinery to meet the tempo in all phases of production. Rather than create more places for workers, the automatic factory seems simply to demand more machines. *Steel* magazine's projected profit and loss statement for an oil pump body factory found the setup and tool change in the automatic factory saving more than half the cost of a regular factory, supervision cost savings two-thirds regular costs, scrap savings one-half, machine repair two-thirds,

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while labor costs were less than one-third that of the ordinary plant.

The mere fact that a new machine is being introduced into a plant indicates a net dimunition of labor employed, or else no economy would be affected. The only way original employment could be continued or enlarged is by the demand for products expanding enough to necessitate keeping on those not needed at old levels of production. If, as automation tends to suggest, labor is displaced at such a ratio and in such a volume as to make exceedingly difficult the possibility of a corresponding rise in production, the problems facing unions are far more indirect and subtle. Simple retraining and seniority agreements, while humanely vital, tend to become secondary to the central issues of income distribution, underconsumption on the part of lower income groups, and the premises on which the economy operates.

And if automation is not met with measures equal to the magnitude of the new technology, and substantial unemployment results, organized labor's ability to press for what it now considers its immediate demands can be radically undermined. Work stoppages in the first quarter of 1954 were half those of the same period of 1953, and coal mining and textiles, which have been depressed industries for years, have an unusually low record for time lost over strikes and sharp demands. Commenting during the height of unemployment in 1954, one company official told a *Wall Street Journal* reporter that union negotiations had become " . . . like going to a pink tea . . . instead of a meeting of radicals." In 1954 innumerable unions, their companies under economic pressure, took lower wages and accepted bonus schemes in order to preserve their jobs under almost any conditions. Kaiser-Willys, Studebaker, and Panther Valley Coal were the most notable of these.

III

The unions face another dilemma, one which has been troubling the economy for a number of years and which will be accentuated under automation. From 1910 to 1950 unskilled workers as a percentage of the work force decreased from 36 per cent to 20 per cent, semi-skilled increased from 15 per cent to 22.4 per cent, and skilled workers and foremen increased from 11.7 per cent to 13.8 per cent. Taken together, however, all such groups decreased from 63 per cent to 56 per cent.

Automation tends to reshift the entire composition of the work force in the direction which makes unionism's organizational position, if not more difficult, certainly more complex. Highly skilled labor as we generally think of it today can be eliminated with relative ease by automation. Semi-skilled labor has an increasingly unimportant role in automation simply because the workers that are needed have increasingly attendant and routinized functions—involving the type of manual operations most susceptible to continued automation.

Eighty years ago there was only one engineer to every 2000 persons in the nation's work force, but today there is one for every 120, with their relative position increasing every year. It is these workers, and those with highly specialized training, that have an increasingly important role in automation. And it is these workers that unionism has shown itself generally incapable of organizing on terms which might preserve the tactical strength it enjoys today by virtue of

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the role its less trained members possess in the industrial process. The challenge to unionism on this level alone is basic.

IV

"An executive may know nothing about machine tools," said C. F. Hautau, chief engineer of a leading automation firm, last year. "But when we talk cost cutting, we talk his language." "We hope to be able to eliminate time-and-a-half overtime pay for Saturday and double-time for Sunday that we're now saddled with," frankly admitted one top Texas oil executive quoted in the *Wall Street Journal*. "Two significant changes are taking place in the battle of man and machine," wrote William Freeman in the *New York Times* in January, 1953. "The worker is coming to be regarded, partly as a result of union pressure, as having as much importance as the machine and requiring as much care in selection and maintenance. And efforts are being speeded to have the machine replace the worker so far as is possible."

Indeed, it is the very success of the union's position that has stimulated the movement behind automation. In addition to the power and resources built up by organized labor during the late 1930s, consolidated in the early 1940s and defended with success since that time, there is the logic of unionism's historic position on technological innovation. To oppose it would make labor seem reactionary, but to support it would have meant the elimination of jobs unless wage conditions were tied to increasing productivity. These stipulations only made labor more expensive, intensifying business desire to install new labor-saving devices, and it may now be legitimately asserted that with automation the problem of expensive labor is fairly well solved. Automatic equipment does not strike, talk back to foremen, file grievances, or do any of the things presently obnoxious to management.

But most important of all, automation arrives at a time when American industry is particularly conscious of cost savings. During the favorable market following World War II, labor in manufacturing industries was able to surpass slightly in earnings the increase in man-hour productivity. As consumer markets closed with the depletion of backlogged savings, and industry's expansion needs were brought up to date, concern for increasing labor costs became more pressing—and so did modernization. "The company with the most room between costs and current prices is obviously in the best shape" was one auto executive's solution to an increasingly tight market, according to the *Wall Street Journal*.

Overloaded with productive facilities, industry since 1952 has increased the percentage of capital expenditures going to modernization from 51 per cent in that year to an estimated aggregate average of 62 per cent for 1954-56. General Electric, for example, was able by modernization to reduce wages as a percentage of sales cost from 47 per cent in 1947 to 36 per cent in 1952.

Industry's reactions can be measured in the sales of automatic control equipment. In March, 1954, when the machine tool industry's backlog of orders was down to a low 4.6 months of the current rate of production, many companies making special purpose tools for automation had backlogs of up to two years. *Steel* has estimated that sales of automatic equipment for metal cutting alone will

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reach $840 million in 1960 as compared to $120 in 1954. And over-all sales for instruments for industrial control in 1960 will reach an estimated 1700 per cent over the 1930 level as compared to an estimated increase for all plant and expenditures of 450 per cent over the same period.

V

Because of the tactical convenience of concentrating on immediate wage and working conditions, and because it has not approached broader social and economic issues with the same seriousness, American unionism has historically been victimized by those larger economic forces beyond the reach of routine union activity. Its disadvantages in negotiating during times of unemployment is only a reflection of the effect such an imbalance in its total perspective can have.

It is in its demands for a more equitable distribution of consumers' purchasing power and extended governmental planning that the CIO has raised its most significant answer to automation. And it is in this realm that unionism has shown itself perplexed and unable to act with the decision it long ago discovered was necessary on the bargaining table and picket line. For it cannot be said that the CIO lacks those who can see the full implications of automation to unionism and society, or that it shares the common thesis that the fear of technological unemployment is a perennial false alarm. "The facts," declared the last CIO convention, "allow no room for the illusion that expansion of employment in the manufacture of the revolutionary new machines will compensate to any substantial degree for contraction of employment in the industries using them."

The aim of the CIO for more equitable income distribution, a goal which seems to be obtainable only through the decisive government action no major party has yet been willing to follow, raises the entire question of what is now minimum union effectiveness. Employee compensation as a percentage of the private national income has, save for periods of increasing unemployment, hovered very closely to the level of 59 per cent for the last three decades. The shares of the national money income going to the lowest half of the income earners, those most in need of increased purchasing power, shifted from 26.8 per cent in 1910 to 21 per cent in 1952. Save for the highest five per cent, taxation has made little difference in this pattern. Yet without some radical shifts towards a level of distribution which would make it possible for mass consumption to keep up with the productivity increases of automation, there seems reasonable assurance that unemployment will follow.

The CIO, while it acknowledges the seriousness of the problem, is still primarily concerned with what it can do, here and now, to counteract automation's effects within the plant. The possibility that these means may be far from effective, or may create conditions for a new type of unionism based on a relatively few highly skilled workers with economic and social aspirations different from the mass of workers, has yet to be admitted publicly. Those in the CIO who understand these possibilities are confined to a relatively few staff members who illustrate the classic dilemma of how far hired hands can publicly deviate from official policy and still keep their tenure.

Nevertheless the CIO's declared

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goals of increased mass consumption, extension of educational opportunities to readjust the work force to the exigencies of automation, and more equitable income distribution remain. As automation's effects become more pressing and undermine the present position of organized labor, the inadequacy of its traditional methods for achieving these indispensable goals may have to be faced. Meanwhile, unionism's dilemma with automation is best epitomized by a statement made by James Petrillo of the Musicians Union a few years ago:

> Unless something radical happens in the near future, it's a bad business for musicians. I advise youngsters to stay out of it—for the time being, anyway. The whole story about a musician's life is in the box. It starts and finishes right there. Gompers tried to fight the machine with the cigarmakers and the union went to hell. Lewis don't fight the machine and the miners are out like a light. We're playing at our own funeral.

2. Polio: The Blessings of . . . ?

Tom Brooks

Sometimes cant harms no one but those who speak it; sometimes, as the wretched mishandling of the polio problem by the Eisenhower administration shows, it can endanger thousands of people.

No one who remembers the hopes of April 12 when the vaccine discovery was officially announced, can look at the summer's record of polio cases without dismay. Admittedly, even during the big build-up in April, there were those who warned that polio would not be completely under control in 1955. However, a record number of cases in Massachusetts—2,841 on September 16 as against 521 on the same day last year—does not speak well for the way the vaccine was handled. In the nation, 16,182 were reported by September; some 3,023 fewer than the 19,205 recorded at the same time last year.

What "might have been" is indicated by comparable statistics from Canada, which reported 612 cases as of September 16 as compared to 2,268 last year. Through intelligent planning Canada cut its polio rate by more than two-thirds.

A brief comparison with the Canadian experience—where a conservative government immediately treated the vaccine discovery as a matter of national interest and socialized both its production and distribution—helps indicate what went wrong in America.

Both governments were kept informed during the development and testing of the Salk vaccine. To say that the United States government did exactly nothing would be incorrect, for it was during this period that the Department of Health, Education and Welfare reduced its technical staff.

Much, much later, Mrs. Hobby, in what was surely one of the most ob-

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tuse remarks in human history, was to inform an interested Senate Committee: *"No one could have foreseen the public acclaim for the vaccine."* Coincidentally, free enterprise myopia appears to have seized the drug companies producing the vaccine; the short supply of the vaccine was indeed fortuitous when the following facts are considered:

Original plans called for the vaccination of 60,000,000 children, the total number in the one to 19 group. The National Polio Foundation ordered 18,000,000 cubic centimeters of vaccine—sufficient for two injections for 9,000,000 children. The balance of 51,000,000 children were thus left as legitimate prey, in a free enterprise way, for any deal ranging from the Cutter Corporation's disgraceful priority offering of vaccine to children of its stockholders to sales of vaccine on the black market.

While the vaccine was being tested only one company (Parke-Davis) out of the seven producers took up an offer by the Polio Foundation to cooperate in further exhaustive work on the vaccine before marketing the serum. Reluctant to risk money when the outcome was still uncertain, the pharmaceutical houses rushed into production once the vaccine appeared safe with the evident desire of making a "killing" under the public pressure for mass inoculation. Stock market speculators were frankly advised in April to buy the "vaccine stocks" in anticipation of the high profits to be made out of this summer's scarcity of vaccine. Drew Pearson has reported that the manufacturers expect to make a cool profit of $10 million.

MEANWHILE, IN CANADA, the principal health officers of each of the ten Canadian provinces—plus five other appointees—acting as the Dominion Council of Health approved plans for the distribution of the vaccine. The Connaught Laboratories of the University of Toronto and the Institute of Microbiology of the University of Montreal, both non-profit organizations, are the sole producers of Canada's Salk vaccine. The Federal Government and the provinces split the cost at $1.50 for each triple dose. The vaccine is allocated to each province on the basis of population and becomes the property of the province. It is given to inoculees free of charge. Priorities have been established on the basis of need for protection.

By contrast, a private physician in the U.S. pays $4.20 for the three shots and is entitled to charge a retail prescription price of $6; nor does this include his fee for injecting the serum.

A million children were vaccinated in Canada under the health program of the provinces. Only two came down with polio.

The number of children vaccinated in the United States is, of course, much higher—6,500,000. Still, a total of 446 cases of polio, 186 of them paralytic, were reported in vaccinated individuals as of September 8. Seventy-nine cases, with five deaths, prior to May 31 were directly the result of defective vaccine. This is the price we pay because of the stupid phobia of "creeping socialism."

Each batch of vaccine manufactured in Canada is double-checked—once by the manufacturer and the second time by the Canadian Health Department. The U. S. government initially carried on a spot-check and cleared vaccine on the manufacturer's protocol, i.e. the manufacturer's rundown of production and testing. The

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U. S. Health Service decided to double-check in May *after* polio turned up in children inoculated by defective vaccine.

The U. S. Health Service Report on the Cutter vaccine released on August 26 did little but confirm the inadequacy of the government's testing procedure, without casting any light on Cutter's culpability. Strangely enough, the Administration has gone so far in its desire to protect private enterprise that it seems to be providing a cover for Cutter, even to the extent of accepting the responsibility for the faulty vaccine. The Health Service hid behind a technicality of the law to absolve Cutter—which would indicate that in actuality the California concern is not entirely blameless.

Chemical Week, McGraw-Hill trade publication, has charged that part of one lot of vaccine which was cleared after the Public Health service started its recheck *had already been used for inoculations!*

"The release of one lot of vaccine was highly publicized with the plain suggestion that the reason it was cleared was because the protocol and plant appraisal program had established its safety.

"Perhaps it might have been mentioned that a part of this batch had already been used to vaccinate several hundred children. When no trouble arose (after an appropriate interval) the remainder was cleared."

This, we take it, is the morality of "free enterprise."

MRS. OVETA CULP HOBBY was sacrificed to forestall any sustained political capital that might be made out of her performance. Her retirement is a neat illustration of the fact that the Eisenhower Administration is amenable to pressure of a kind. The mindless conservative (Mrs. Hobby) was, after all, replaced by the sophisticated conservative (Mr. Folsom). A shift, moreover, which has not offended the AMA.

Congress, subject to more conflicting pressures, has now authorized $30,000,000 to the states for the free distribution of the Salk vaccine. This despite Mrs. Hobby's fears, hardly opens the back door to socialism. The money must be spent by February 15 of next year and while the law does not openly call for a degrading means test it does specify that free vaccine is only for children unable to afford it, letting the states decide who can afford the vaccine.

The credit for Mrs. Hobby's "voluntarism," the Administration's mental block against regulation, and the public's silence goes to the American Medical Association. The disquieting fact is that the only group to do *any* planning was the AMA. In 1949, the 140,000 members of the AMA were asked to cough up $25 apiece for a drive against "creeping socialism" and socialized medicine. The effect of that drive was felt behind every development, or lack of development, in the polio mixup.

Dr. Jonas E. Salk offers a sharp contrast to the attitude of the Administration, the AMA, and the drug companies. He has renounced all claims to profit on his great discovery. When asked about the possibility of patenting his process, Salk replied: "Can you patent the Sun?"

Deep in her dear little heart Mrs. Hobby must have wondered whether he too had not been infused with "creeping socialism."

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3. Pompey's Head and the Middle Class Hero

Harvey Swados

The American residing in Europe seems always to be confronted with the perennial attempt to sum up America in a word. The word used to be gangsters or skyscrapers; today it is often McCarthyism.

This insistence on reducing the irreducible to an easily digestible quantity has changed since the war in at least one major respect. The shift in the nature of European misconceptions about the United States has been accompanied by a shift in the status of those holding them, from the working classes to the "educated" classes. After a while one begins to wish that the latter had ready access not just to Communist falsification, or to Hollywood movies, or even to Faulkner, Hemingway and Dashiell Hammett, but to some of the popular novels now being digested by their American opposites. The novelist may attempt to encompass only a small and perhaps "unrepresentative" fragment of the American scene, but still it is to him that one turns for news of what America is about, rather than to the special pleaders who parrot ghost-written speeches out of Washington, or the polemicists who preach to the peace congresses, with one eye over their shoulder, the sermon of an infected America.

To this day there is no single document which affords, consciously or inadvertently, more revealing insights into the middle-class attitude toward war and militarism than does *The Caine Mutiny;* and I suspect that a new best-seller may very well have done for post-war middle-class America what *The Caine Mutiny* did for the America of the war years.

The View from Pompey's Head, by Hamilton Basso, is in the main concerned with serious matters. Presumably returning to his home town on business, Anson Page is actually on a voyage of rediscovery, to see if the past—as exemplified in the attractive southern town where he grew up—has more to offer than the present in New York City.

As naggingly conscious of status as a J. P. Marquand hero, Anson has left Pompey's Head after his father alienated the community by defending an old Negro drunkard. In New York he is taken into an old law firm even though he did not go to an Ivy League college, marries a handsome midwest girl with whom he has a son and a daughter, and at the age of thirty-nine is renting an apartment in the East Seventies for $375 a month. He has made good.

Yet Anson, on the brink of middle age, is again as unhappily aware as a J. P. Marquand hero that somehow life is not working out as it should. The apartment does not seem to be worth the rental. The children do not seem to benefit from their private school. The family prepares to search for a Connecticut "farm" which will only be an extension of its over-

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priced apartment. The job itself is no longer challenging, but is only a safe harbor, respectable and dull. Anson is faced with the question that confronts so many liberal-minded middle-class Americans when they reach the point of having gained possession of all the things that they are supposed to want: has it all been worthwhile? In his case, the problem is thrown into sharper relief by the business trip to his home town which has haunted him ever since he left it.

What is odd however about this opposition of past and present is the poverty of detail with which Mr. Basso invests the present in contrast to the overwhelming, suffocating mass of incident and description with which he furnishes the past of Pompey's Head, down to the very stones of the houses. ("The Hanby house . . . which the guide said was now an antique shop—did it have curved sandstone steps at either end of its front stairway or didn't it? . . . Gaby Carpenter's house had steps like that, and so had the Johnsons', but the Hanbys'— . . . ")

WE ARE NEVER REALLY INTRODUCED to Anson's children. We know that his job is pleasant but dull, but we are never told what he and Meg do with their evenings: apparently it is assumed that we can guess. Anson reflects that his wife is prettier than ever after twelve years of marriage, but we are left to wonder about their marital relations until nearly the end of the book; and while we know that he admires her grit and her liberal politics and is puzzled by her disdain for her own past, we are not sure whether they are perhaps mismated or merely genially argumentative ("He smiled at Meg and she smiled back . . . 'Now and then I wonder if I married the right girl,' he said. 'I do too . . . Not only now and then, though. I wonder all the time.' ").

By contrast with these bare bones, the flesh of Pompey's Head is not merely filled out—it is padded and bustled too. For hundreds of pages we are regaled with minutiae about houses, streets, neighborhoods, schools, hunting, fishing, traditions, customs, history, soldiers, battles, statues, girls, dates, necking—everything that meant anything to Sonny Page and still means something to Anson Page, the returned voyager. One is forced to conclude, not that the author has loaded the dice in favor of the past—for we learn at the end that this was not his intention—but that he feels the situation of Anson Page and his family in the American present to be so fairly typical that it can be immediately recognized by means of the shorthand employed; whereas the American past as typified by Pompey's Head has already faded so from the common memory that it must be recapitulated in nearly endless detail. To be sure, there is an alternative possibility: that Mr. Basso finds the present life of Anson Page (and therefore of all the Anson Pages) so staggeringly dull and fictionally hopeless that he can bring himself to do no more than indicate it, while saving his literary powers for the evocation of a presumably richer past. But this is a judgment which can only be made subjectively, and must therefore be left to the individual reader.

In the course of this journey to the end of the past, Anson Page does more than recall adolescent experiences. The glamor of the past wears

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off as he discovers that almost without exception those of his boyhood friends who should have risen, or maintained their positions in society, have fallen, and those who were not entitled to, have risen. His girl friend from the wrong side of the tracks has become a placid housewife, but her aggressive brother is now a millionaire who has bought and refurbished the decaying ancestral mansion of Anson's boyhood pal, Whit Blackford, and has even bought and married Whit's little sister Dinah. When he attempts to buy Anson with a fat annual retainer Anson refuses coldly but cannot prevent himself from falling "hopelessly" in love with Dinah . . . and we have arrived at the climax of the novel.

Dinah of course has "always" loved Anson, despite her vulgar husband and her three children. "She somehow represented the lost security of the house on Alwyn Street, together with all else that was lost, the whole lost world of Sonny Page, and she promised comfort and release." On the eve of the successful accomplishment of his mission, Anson takes Dinah to bed with him in the very room of the mansion where he had slept as a boy: " . . . at last he possessed her, in a wholeness of possession he had never known or dreamed, past and present came thundering together and he was master and owner of it all." There is no way of knowing whether the impact of these words was intentional, but consider what a sudden, blinding light they cast upon the hero's hitherto chastely undiscussed twelve years of married life!

And not only this. Mingling his footprints with Dinah's on the beach, Anson reflects: "He knew all the faults of Pompey's Head and the things it could do to people, and yet, since he knew, he might have been able to work out his own solution; Pompey's Head was the only place he ever belonged, and not once since he left had he felt that he belonged anywhere."

ALL THIS BEING SO, why must Anson in the end leave Dinah, Pompey's Head, and all the past, for Meg, New York City, and all the future? It seems to me that the answer reveals a good deal about the present situation of those readers who have pushed *The View from Pompey's Head* to the top of the best-seller list. There is more to it than the mere recognition of the fact that you can't go home again—although this has its appeal to millions of Americans who have left the farm forever for the city and are now leaving the city forever for the suburbs.

The fact is that Anson recognizes the impossibility of the past as a way of life while he is at a party given by Dinah and her *nouveau-riche* husband, where "everybody was talking at once about cars and money and trips to Europe and the Cliftons' new station wagon . . . It was a long time since Anson had felt so completely out of things . . . It was not that he thought he was better than they, or more intelligent, or endowed with deeper sensibilities. He simply did not belong with them. He belonged with them even less than he belonged with Meg's friends from the news magazine . . . "

Anson, then, accepts the present not as something challenging, but as a lesser evil than the past. And what he rejects about the past is the fact

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that the old values of conservatism—the concepts of family, of the gentleman and the lady, of the ancestral home and ancestor worship—are not only inapplicable today, but have degenerated into sterile chatter "about cars and money and trips to Europe."

We need not be misled by what may be called the misplaced pathos of Pompey's Head (by which I mean only that what is pitiable about the Anson Pages, whether or not they understand, is not their renunciation of the riches of the past but their acceptance of the poverty of the present); for what remains after all the mooning is a definitive rejection of what Europeans even more than Americans regard as the trappings of a hateful reactionary past.

This central fact has not yet become apparent to the European intellectual who is understandably bemused, even after Roosevelt, Truman, Stevenson and Eisenhower, by the ugly sounds and evil deeds of that confused but potent minority known as McCarthyites, and perhaps better described by Richard Hofstadter (after T. W. Adorno) as pseudo-conservatives. If it means little to him that even Eisenhower could not be President without subscribing to the principal planks of the New Deal platform, perhaps he might ponder the implications of a milieu in which it is all but impossible to conceive of a best-seller hero (and therefore of a movie hero) who is a McCarthyite, or a pseudo-conservative, or an anti-Semite or a Negro-hater, or of one who, faced like Anson Page with the choice between the conservative stereotype and the liberal stereotype, would opt for the former.

Then perhaps he might more readily extend to the American people not the suspicion which he now accords them but rather the sympathy to which they are entitled on three counts. First because they extended the same sympathy to Europe, if crudely and distortedly, at a time when it was sorely needed. Second because while still dazed with their nation's power they are now grievously afflicted with the nastiness of those frustrated neurotics in their midst who, not knowing how to love, would rather hate. And third and most important because the actual present in America is more closely approximated by the life of Anson Page (at a lower economic level, to be sure) than it is by McCarthyism: by Anson's job, which is not a way of life but an income provider; by his apartment, which is not a home but a price tag; by his future country house, which is only a bigger price tag; by his children, who are not people at all but only occasions for worry about the expense of their upbringing, the adequacy of their conveyance to school, and the necessity for social relations with the parents of their playmates; and by his wife, who is not a woman really but an animated Stevenson (or Eisenhower) fan, a fanatical middle of

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Team, Team, Team!

After ex-Senator Harry Cain of Washington gave his speech criticizing the Attorney General's Subversive List, he received a phone call from Sherman Adams, executive assistant to the President, asking him to stop by his office.

"He gave me unshirted hell," recalls Cain in *Colliers*, September 2, 1955. "I tried to explain the merits of my criticism of the security program, but he snorted: 'To hell with the merits. You understand this problem better than I do, but this is a team and you're expected to play on it.'"

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the roader who has never spiritually graduated from Bennington and has "moments of wishing she were back on the news magazine" for which she had been a deliriously happy researcher before her marriage.

For hers indeed is the voice of America, if only Europe could hear it through the jamming of the Communists and the McCarthyites: equally angry with Harry Vaughan, Franco, McCarthy, Stalin, the children's teachers, and Chiang Kai-shek, it heralds a different kind of conformity, calling for concerted action towards better school transportation and swifter progress towards "that home in the country." And the stifled accompaniment is the truly pathetic voice of the husband who, turning wearily from the talk "about cars and money and tripi to Europe," wonders just how different is the talk that he will be able to hear in the sad, rich years ahead.

In the Fall 1955 issue of

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In the following article A. J. Muste, one of America's best-known pacifists, offers an analysis of the current international situation from the perspective of pacifist socialism. Within the limits of its space, DISSENT *welcomes comments on Mr. Muste's article. We hope in the coming period to print a variety of socialist opinions, though not necessarily those alone, on the problems raised by Mr. Muste.*

CO-EXISTENCE, NEUTRALISM, THIRD FORCE

A. J. Muste

I

This comment on the international situation and plea that politically conscious Americans, especially non-Stalinists, should give more support to the development of a Third Camp starts with several assumptions. I shall not attempt to argue their validity, save in very cursory fashion.

One of them is that the United States and the Soviet Union have not ceased to be heavily armed power-states engaged in a global power-struggle. No decisive steps to liquidate that conflict, which would entail something like a revolutionary transformation in both regimes, including their economies and spiritual outlooks, have yet been taken. For the moment there is a stalemate in power-relationships which is reflected in a series of "truces" in Korea, Indo-China, the Formosan waters, and Germany. This is not new in the history of power conflicts.

Secondly, the conflict between the "capitalist" and Communist economic systems has not undergone any abatement, much less entered the road to liquidation. Moreover, the needs of mankind in the atomic age cannot be adequately served by either of these systems or the world-outlook associated with them.

Thirdly, I do not believe that "the balance of terror" produced by equal stockpiles of H-bombs is going to deliver mankind from the scourge of global war. This is not to say that the awful potentialities of nuclear and biological weapons have not at last impressed the imagination of masses throughout the world, so that statesmen have to engage in intensive psychological war over their repute for being men of peace. Nor am I denying that these statesmen are in a certain sense sincere and also feel a dread of nuclear war. This does not, however, deter leaders on both sides from feverish efforts to "perfect" their weapons. If we are realistic, I think we shall conclude that one very important reason why

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"nobody wants war" just now is that the military have not had time to work out the strategy of nuclear war and are, furthermore, in the very midst of experimentation with new types of weapons which, each side hopes, may prove of decisive advantage.

The nature of the new weapons requires a vast amount of preparation for any large-scale war and may even lead to "agreements" not to use them in the future, agreements which will quite possibly be kept in the early stages of a war, but which would not be respected when resort to such weapons appeared the one remaining resource against catastrophic defeat.

Professor John von Neumann, the famous scientist who is now a member of the Atomic Energy Commission, recently disposed of the argument that because nuclear war spells mutual annihilation the case against war is now "practical" and not merely ethical or idealistic. In the June 1955 *Fortune* he points out that "practical" reasons have been cogent in the past when weapons certainly *appeared* to be capable of vast destruction. "True, this time the danger of destruction seems to be real rather than apparent, but there is no guarantee that a real danger can control human actions better than a convincing appearance of danger." He makes this observation while suggesting that the next stage in scientific advance may be in climate control and that "the most constructive schemes for climate control would have to be based on insights and techniques that would also lend themselves to forms of climatic warfare as yet unimagined!" His conclusion that we have to look to "the resolution of international problems" rather than "balance of terror" fantasies seems thoroughly sound.

II

Let us, then, glance at the political situation. Since the Geneva conference, attention has been largely concentrated on the Big Four, and especially the Big Two, who met there. But in the months preceding Geneva it was the nations "in between," the satellites of the big powers and the "uncommitted" nations, which held the spotlight.

Any competent observer asked to pick out the outstanding political events of the spring of 1955 would be sure to include the Bandung Conference of Asian-African nations and the journey of top flight Soviet rulers to Belgrade.

The Bandung Conference was chiefly notable because something like a "third position" began to emerge. The international scene since the close of World War II has been dominated by the polarization of power in two great nations and their *de facto,* though not always *de jure,* satellites. The nations not solidly in one of the alliances might be "neutral" but definitely "neutral against" one or another power-bloc.

It is true that sharp things were said at Bandung about the United States and the western colonial powers, as was inevitable at an Asian-African gathering. But sharply critical things were also said about Communism and about Communist China, a conference member. The mere fact that *both* kinds of speeches were made from the *same* platform

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and were listened to by *all* the participants, suggested that a new factor was being introduced into international politics. But more, the Nehru-Chou En-lai strategy was to have the conference concentrate on the things the delegates agreed on, such as rejection of western imperialism, and to eliminate "controversial" discussion. Whatever Nehru's intention was, the effect would have been to give the meeting an anti-western slant and in a way to give the impression that the global power conflict, and conflict of ideologies, was not so serious or urgent that it needed to be faced.

The approach which won out was a different one, namely that there are two kinds of power regimes and both are dangerous; two kinds of colonialism and both bad; we, Asian and African peoples, have to resist both, not by military might which we do not possess, but by following an essentially independent course. This is different from a simple neutralism which wants to keep free of involvement and avoid taking sides. It is also different from the conventional neutralism which takes sides, but covertly.

What Tito represents is not a firm Third Camp orientation. But the journey of the Russian Communist chiefs to Belgrade, which might be likened to a visit by the Pope to the Archbishop of Canterbury or Methodist Bishop Oxnam for the purpose of discussing the re-union of Christendom; the invitation to Tito that he come back and the admission, at least for the immediate purpose, that Titoism is a version of genuine Leninism; all this fits into the pattern we are describing. It is sometimes argued that the leaders of the big powers are now cultivating the uncommitted nations because they have changed their minds. And there is no question that internal conditions in both Russia and the west, as well as the spectre of atomic suicide, have a bearing upon current international developments. But the crucial fact remains that the big powers have changed their minds because they had to. The Communist strategists advocate a "neutral belt" in Europe and the idea is seriously entertained by policy-makers in non-Communist countries including the United States; the latter increasingly tolerate Nehru and even Krishna Menon while deeply resenting them, because the strategy of forcing everybody to be "friendly" to this side or that has run up against a stone wall. Everybody has to *talk* about "neutralism" or a "third solution" because the peoples "in between" have suddenly taken on a new significance and may hold the key to the future.

Here the factor of "H-bomb terror" does play an important part. In his column of May 24, 1955 Walter Lippmann wrote, "The contest, we must not allow ourselves to forget, is for the support of the masses of the people who are mortally afraid of atomic war—who have themselves no atomic weapons, who have no defense against atomic weapons. There are only two atomic powers in the world."

These smaller powers, as Lippmann pointed out, have no defense at all against atomic war and therefore cannot be induced to take seriously, as a good many people in the United States and no doubt Russia still do, the idea that the "defenses" may "work" fairly well. And

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there is even the possibility that if a war got under way, the big powers would, before they themselves had suffered irreparable losses, negotiate a settlement at the expense of the smaller ones. It is interesting that in commenting on Geneva the London *New Statesman and Nation* recalled the late Ernest Bevin's assumption that if the Big Two "gang up, there will be nothing left for anyone else."

As the crucial political issues dividing East and West remain unresolved and the race in super-weapons continues, the peoples "in between" will be forced to continue resistance to the polarization of power and to seek to keep out of both orbits. Russia and the United States will consequently continue to feel uncertain about the "loyalty" and dependability of their allies and satellites, and their suspicions will be amply justified. American policy makers will certainly make a colossal blunder if they think that in a showdown any other nations are going to go along with a policy based on the view advocated even by such intelligent people as Elmer Davis that the extinction of the race would be preferable to "submission to Communist rule." But Russian policy makers face a not dissimilar situation. If we move toward ever more fantastic modes of warfare, the cleavage between Russia and the United States may come to be less decisive than that which places these two Colossi on one side and most of the rest of the world on the other. Ultimately people are not likely to believe that the Russian arsenal is a force for peace and the American for war, or vice versa, and they will become immunized to the peace talk from both sides. It will be like one of the bitter fights between union factions in the New York garment trades twenty years ago. Each side persistently accused the other of being liars and crooks, and it ended with the workers believing them both and walking out on them. This behavior may be described as "dynamic neutralism."

III

In spite of all this, no third grouping with a consistent program exists today, and to a great extent those governments which "have" to seek a third position fail to reach it, either ending up as reluctant or deluded satellites or oscillating between attempts to appease now one and now another of the blocs.

One reason such nations fail to achieve real independence is that they have their own ideas of national interest as well as emotional conflicts among themselves. The failure of the Asian-African nations to invite Israel to Bandung because of the Israeli-Arab clash, the pre-occupation of India with its conflict with Pakistan over Kashmir, are illustrations that might be multiplied. But essentially this is not so much an explanation as a phenomenon itself calling for explanation. The deeper explanation is in two parts which are, however, very closely intertwined.

A simple way to formulate our first point is to say that in this period there is no conscious and effective movement for building a democratic socialist society. There is consequently no compelling social vision which would furnish the masses an alternative to "prosperity" under a modified capitalism or "security" under Communism. Men are limited to a choice

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of highly mechanized and centralized regimes far removed from anything that might be called workers' democracy.

The program of the right and center wings in the Socialist parties of the West is essentially to keep for the workers the benefits of the Welfare State or increase them moderately, and to conserve such liberties as can be conserved in a world largely on a war footing. In "good" or quiet times the allegiance of trade unionists and some intellectuals can be retained on this basis, especially if there are jobs for the latter in the civil service or "the movement." Whenever things become critical, ground must be given—the masses are no longer sustained by a vision which renders defeat stimulating rather than depressing—and support has to be sought on the right among capitalists who have also accepted the Welfare State.

The more radical elements among European socialists, the Bevanites in Great Britain, for example, are prevented from developing a sound and distinctive program because of their apparent conviction that Communism is in some important respects "progressive"—if not in Russia, then in China—and that it is in any case the "lesser evil" in comparison with U. S., if not British, capitalism. They are inclined to look hopefully to such figures as Tito as allies, though now that Tito has been assured by the Russians that he is indeed a comrade, it will be interesting to see what the Bevanite reaction will be.

One result is that just as the more conservative elements in the Socialist parties are subject to a pull toward collaboration with non-socialist forces, so the more "radical" socialists can in critical times often be drawn toward a "united front" with the Communists. But it is obvious that the CP with its Russian and Chinese bases is always bound to dominate such a "front" and no independent democratic socialist force is going to grow out of it. (I am assuming that for the readers of DISSENT I do not need to argue the point that the Communist movement is not going to develop from within into a democratic and socialist one, though I do not regard it as completely static.)

There is no occasion for "acting uppity," as New Englanders used to say, toward the socialists of the West because of what has happened to the movement. Certainly one of the important reasons for its decline is the difficulty of formulating concretely a democratic and socialist program fitted to the realities of the atomic era and capable both of attracting substantial popular support and of meeting human needs. DISSENT has, I think, rendered an important service by publishing articles by G. D. H. Cole and Asoka Mehta, as well as others, dealing with this problem. What I am here pleading for is that this kind of thinking should go ahead in a certain mood and with a certain objective. Our intellectual work should, it seems to me, be political rather than detached or academic. We should consider how to act as responsible political persons. To plead for such thinking which is severely analytical but also architectonic in the realm of social organization and capable of evoking visions of liberation and new life, is not synonymous with indulging a fantasy that a mass democratic socialist or Third Camp

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movement is a possibility in the United States in the near future. But it may well be, as the example of Marx himself and of other figures in the early days of the socialist movement suggests, that such thinking is one of the indispensable elements in the creation of a movement.

The factor just mentioned is, however, not the only one in the decline of the socialist movement of the West. One of the most serious and depressing is that these parties no longer have their being in international socialism. In each country they adopt the national and governmental attitudes and causes. Reports from the fourth Congress of the Socialist International held in London in July indicate not only that Hugh Gaitskell's speech could have been delivered without alteration by Anthony Eden but that the debate between the French and German SP delegates was practically identical with a debate between any group of French and German political figures, other than Communists or extreme rightists. "At this point it seemed to a good many delegates and observers," writes G. L. Arnold in *The New Leader,* "that international Socialism had finally given up the ghost."

One of the worst results of this nationalistic development is the cleavage between the Socialist parties of the West and those of Asia, as illustrated by the separate organization of the Asian Socialist Congress. The Communist movement in the Orient derives an incalculable advantage from this situation. How different the world scene would look today if labor and Socialist organizers from the West, not bound to the service of capitalist interests, were anywhere near as plentiful as Moscow-trained organizers are, and if there were an international movement devoted to building a world socialist society! As it is, the aid which Asian Socialists derive from the West is negligible. In some respects the Western parties may even add to their burdens.

IV

The second basic explanation for the failure of the "in between" nations to develop into a genuine Third Force is that their peoples, including the laborites, Socialists and liberals cannot make up their minds about what constitutes security in the atomic age. They begin with mortal terror of the atomic war likely to result from the struggle between the two Leviathans. Even if they acquired atomic weapons it would be as satellites of a big power. They would thus contribute to the polarization of power which they want to slow down and eventually remove. They would lay themselves open to what they are bent on averting—the atomic terror. They are in a sense forced to look toward an essentially non-military basis for their security and development.

To draw the logical conclusion from the military technology of the atomic age would, however, represent a revolutionary departure from the conventional behavior of nations. We have, accordingly, any number of instances of inconsistent behavior. There are nations practicing what might be called the neutralism of weakness, hoping that the big powers will leave them alone while they spin rationalizations about

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the peaceful intentions of one or the other of them. And occasionally some nations "in between" persuade themselves that neutrality, equivalent to security, will be bestowed upon them by the dominant powers because the latter "need" neutral corridors to keep them apart.

We have cases of nations and politicians alleging that the formation of military blocs is the great evil of our time, but themselves accepting substantial military support from one of the big powers and entering into military alliances with neighboring states. Tito, for example, having received very substantial military aid from the United States, which presumably rendered him "independent" of Russia, is nevertheless irked because the American State Department will not let him manufacture jet planes for himself. He is accordingly tempted by a Kremlin proposition to let him manufacture MIGs which presumably will make Yugoslavia "independent" of the United States.

There is Nehru, whose abhorrence of violence and love of freedom does not keep him from very friendly relations with the Chinese and Russian regimes or from relying ultimately on military weapons in his dealings with Pakistan. There are the Bevanites, who can be extremely eloquent about the "subservience" of British Tories and non-Bevanite Laborites to Washington but who never clearly demand that U. S. occupation of atomic bases in Britain should be abolished. There is the pathetic and often undignified behavior of France which can no longer support a modern military establishment yet strives to be treated as a big power.

Germany is another illustration. M. S. Handler, in *The New York Times* of May 8, 1955, observed that the German people never speak of the "defeat" but always of the "collapse" of 1945. "Nevertheless," he continues, "the Germans will send their sons to the new army—with the inner hope that they are placing their cherished ones on the international bargaining counter to produce the rebirth of a national German state." But then he makes the statement with which most experienced observers in Western Europe agree—and which in essence also applies to the rest of Western Europe: *"Were the West Germans ever convinced that German rearmament meant another contest on the battlefield with the Russians, they would resist the draft in the streets of their cities, towns and villages."*

This analysis serves admirably to point up the painfulness as well as the illogicality of the position in which the German people, a short decade ago disarmed "forever" by the victors of World War II, now find themselves as they start rearming. It is as if they said to themselves: "First, we must have an army, since this is an attribute of sovereignty and we will be given this status by the United States only if we contribute divisions to the Western alliance. Secondly, realism compels the recognition that this involves us in the East-West struggle. Thirdly, realism also compels the admission that we can no longer cast a decisive or even a very weighty military vote and that we are not purchasing durable security. Fourthly, if war comes, we shall be *militarily* impotent. Furthermore, because of what we have already gone through, we shall simply

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be unable to stomach it. Don't expect this non-atomic army to fight in the great atomic war."

V

If a third grouping is to achieve independence, it will have to follow the logic of its position and find an essentially non-military basis for organizing its life. It will have to devote its energies to the development of a saner human society than it is possible for the atomic powers to achieve.

There is naturally the question: granted that the nations "in between" cannot find security by some kind of non-atomic military strength, is it not also true that, lacking such strength, they will be exposed to the pressure of the big powers, to the risk of being deprived of their independence, to occupation and devastation if atomic war does come?

One obviously has to admit that if atomic war takes place, there is no guarantee that any nation will go unscathed. But I cannot for the life of me see how the uncommitted nations are *less* safe than if they were allied with one or other big power and had its bases and troops on their soil. I cannot figure how the independent countries would not be more likely to escape—unless the world is literally destroyed, in which case, by definition, nobody survives. Even in contemplation of this extreme case one would assume that the peoples we are talking about might prefer to have been involved in a promising effort to avert the catastrophe—and pending that event free from the burden of armaments —rather than having been accomplices in bringing about the apocalypse.

But this *is* the extreme case. Actually, the present position is this: the basic reason why the global power struggle and the atomic arms race have not continued to mount in intensity is that there are peoples, weak in a military sense, that have refused to join in. The dominant powers have both found that their allies or satellites are undependable and have refused to be driven beyond a certain point.

It is in this ability to say no, in the slowing down and perhaps drying up of recruiting by the big powers for atomic war, that the strength of the "in between" peoples resides. It is the power of corporate non-violence, which is not the same thing as personal pacifism or conscientious objection to war. It is essentially economic, political, moral power. As Hanson Baldwin, the brilliant military analyst of *The New York Times,* has pointed out:

> As of today this third force of neutralist or independent states cannot compare in physical power with either the Communist states or the anti-Communist group. It is unlikely that it can ever be compared in physical terms. For the neutralist bloc is by definition independent, putting no faith in alliances, owing nothing to collective or regional security. Its collective power will be moral and political rather than physical. (May 22, 1955)

One of the clearest statements of the matter was made by Sir John Kotelawala, premier of Ceylon, at the Bandung Conference. He asserted

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that "the argument of physical force must yield to the argument of spiritual power" and went on to say that the strength of the Asian-African nations derived precisely from the fact that they lacked physical force and were therefore driven to generate a different kind of power. He recalled that "not one country in this whole region manufactures nuclear weapons" and reminded them that we "come to the conference table weak and relatively unarmed, with no thermonuclear bombs in our pockets, no weapons of chemical or bacteriological warfare up our sleeves, no plans for armament factories or blueprints for ever more deadly methods of genocide in our brief cases." Then he made the striking statement that there is strength in Asia's and Africa's weakness: "the ability which our very defenselessness confers to offer ourselves as mediators in the dispute between the giants of communism and anti-communism."

If the uncommitted peoples adhere firmly to the course of independence from both dominant powers, which has already forced both powers to pay attention and moderate their course, why should this expose them to attack by those powers? It is this course which has already given the uncommitted nations power, though not of the atomic and military sort. Their safety lies precisely in continuing to follow the program and build on the kind of power which has given them a strategic position on the world scene and in building a free and cooperative society. The contagion of their example is bound to spread.

In the final analysis the great advantage of such a Third Force derives, as Sir John Kotelawala stated, from the fact that its power is political and moral in nature, and therefore the Third Force can perform the function of mediator and reconciler. Not being atomically armed it can call upon those who are to disarm. Not having yielded to the irrational temptation to join the arms race, it can call the great who have gone mad back to sanity. Its possibilities for beneficent penetration and nonviolent subversion are limitless.

Obviously, the argument that small countries attempting to achieve true independence might suffer from the loss of economic aid poses a very serious problem. Here only a few remarks are possible. Both of the major power-blocs apply economic pressure in order to keep the smaller nations in line. The latter would certainly have to be ready to make some economic sacrifice for the sake of independence of action. If they let it be known that they are not prepared to do so, they make the job of purchasing their conformity a relatively inexpensive one, and since this, in turn, contributes to the process of polarization and intensified world struggle, the price they themselves may eventually have to pay is that of involvement in a catastrophic war.

How much of an economic sacrifice, if any, the "in between" nations would actually have to make, depends largely on the extent to which they would cooperate among themselves. I have heard it said by economists that in terms of resources the present Communist bloc, the bloc headed by the United States, and a group of nations that might include Western Europe, parts of Asia, and Africa would be approximately equal

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—though, obviously, this equality might not for some time be realized in the utilization of their resources.

Finally, the economic factor, like the military, cuts both ways. The smaller powers appear to be militarily dependent upon the big ones, yet they are not at all helpless and the withdrawal of their support has exerted a marked influence on "the cold war." Especially if, as we suggested a moment ago, they learn to bargain collectively, they can exercise influence on economic developments through their control of strategic materials. If they managed to devise a democratic socialism adapted to the needs of the contemporary world, this socio-economic regime would, I think, exert a great drawing power on large numbers in both the Communist and anti-Communist worlds.

For the realization of such objectives a Third Camp ideology and movement are essential. The existence of such a movement would also solve the personal problem of men and women of principle who now have no political home, as R. H. S. Crossman pointed out in *The New Statesman and Nation* (July 31, 1954). He was discussing various theories about the defection of Dr. Otto John, the West German secret service chief, to the East, and concluded that John had probably moved on his own volition: "A German with no principles whatsoever can loyally serve, first, the Weimar Republic, then the Third Reich, next an Anglo-American Occupation pledged to extirpate militarism and Nazism, and, finally, a West German Government rapidly coming under Nazi control. But where does the loyalty lie of a German patriot who has lived through these political vicissitudes?" Should a person like Dr. John "be loyal to the Americans and to the 'democratic' Republic of Dr. Globke and General von Gahlen?" Crossman concludes: "Today the patriotic German who is truly opposed to Nazism is *The Man Between. He can give his loyalty to neither side if he is a man of principle.*"

Mehta Reprints Available

A limited number of reprints of the two articles by Asoka Mehta on Asia (DISSENT, Spring and Summer issues, 1955) are now available at 25 cents a copy. Mehta's articles, which form part of a pamphlet published in India, were received with great interest, and we have had many requests for copies. 20 cents in bundles of 5 or more.

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PROUDHON, AN APPRECIATION

George Woodcock

The extent to which Proudhon's contributions to radical thought are overlooked even among radicals was impressed upon me by a recent article in DISSENT (Spring, 1954) in which Lewis Coser and Irving Howe discussed the differences between Marx and his utopian socialist contemporaries in a way which suggested that they considered Marx and Engels to be alone in their anti-utopianism. As if laying extended claims for Marxian originality, they talked of "the importance of Marx's idea that socialism is to be brought about, in the first instance, by the activities of a major segment of the population, the workers"; they added that "Marx found the sources of revolt within the self-expanding and self-destroying rhythms of the economy itself," and that he "gave new power to the revolt against history, by locating it, 'scientifically,' within history." In fact, not only was Proudhon as persistent and pertinent a critic of utopian tendencies as either of the German socialists but he also anticipated the very insights for which Coser and Howe appear to regard Marx-Engels as originally responsible. What is perhaps more important for our own day is that he developed them in a way that enabled him to foresee and to warn against some of the more disastrous tendencies (e.g. towards centralism and bureaucratization) that have become frozen into many areas of socialist practice.

Proudhon was an *aficionado* of irony and paradox, and it was therefore appropriate that his introduction to socialism should have come through the utopians he later rejected. As a young printer in Besançon, he supervised the production of Fourier's *Le Nouveau Monde Industrial et Sociétaire* and was fascinated by its author's strange combination of insight and eccentricity. At the same time he was strongly critical of the more fantastic aspects of Fourier's work, and a little later, in 1832, when the Fourierists invited him to edit a paper, he showed an independence that anticipated his later developmnt as a critical, unutopian social thinker. "You asked me yesterday," he wrote to them, "whether I would write in a public sheet opinions which I profess and which we hold in common, and you added: 'Undoubtedly not' . . . Why should we not invite the population to make themselves capable of managing their own affairs and of preparing the way for a confederation of peoples? Let them see, through instruction, science, moral health and patriotism, how to dispense with all ministerial hierarchy, while in the meantime profiting from the little good it will do them."

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This is the first existing document in which Proudhon assumes an emphatic attitude, and it already incorporates some of the salient elements of his later views—the distrust of authority as such and of centralized authority in particular; the desire to see the working people learn to manage their own affairs with a minimum of intervention (already a sharp divergence from the utopian preoccupation with societies planned from above); the fear of Jacobin nationalism implied in the hope for a "confederation of peoples."

DURING THE FORMATIVE, AUTODIDACTIC years of the 1830s, Proudhon's sense of the needs and potentialities of the working class, to which he declared himself to belong "today and for ever, by nature, by habit and above all by the community of interests and wishes," led him through the devious courses of philology and Biblical scholarship, and by way of such curious speculations as whether the Mosaic command, *Lo thignob,* meant "Thou shalt not steal" or "Thou shalt not lay anything aside for thyself," to a consideration of the economic bases of socialism and, in particular, of property relationships. The scattered apprentice essays of this period, on such subjects as the origin of languages and the utility of Sunday observance, are studded with ideas which intimate the independent development of a social attitude.

By 1840 these hints had been integrated into his first influential work, *What is Property?* which Marx hailed five years later as "truly the first decisive, vigorous and scientific examination" of property, as "a great scientific progress, which revolutionizes political economy and for the first time permits one to make a true science of it." In the present essay it is impossible to examine every aspect of this provocative book, which created one of the great political catchwords of the nineteenth century ("Property is theft") and made one of its historic definitions by applying the name "anarchism" to that trend in socialism which regards the elimination of government as of primary importance. But a number of points demand consideration for the light they throw upon the general Proudhonian attitude.

Proudhon, we should emphasize, does not set himself up as a communist, even in the sense of the 1840s. In emphasizing as a goal equality of condition, he still defends possession. What he attacks is the property by which a man exploits the labor of others, the property associated with interest, rent, the wage system. But a man's right to control the house he inhabits and the land and tools he needs to work and live, so long as he uses them for these purposes alone, Proudhon regards as a keystone of liberty. Control of production should lie at the point of production, and the social function of distribution should grow upward and outward from that point. At the same time, as becomes evident in his later works, Proudhon was not exclusively—as some of his critics have suggested—an advocate of the individual worker. For large-scale industry and transport he envisaged cooperative operation, but his attitude towards such matters was strictly functional, and

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he held that the invocation of association as a principle would tend towards social rigidity and the destruction of freedom. It was particularly their tendency to erect hypothetical systems which had little relationship to the actual needs of individual men and women that he held against the utopians. His criticism of the Phalansterian and Icarian communists of his time has an extremely topical interest in its anticipation of the situation that has tended to develop in the countries which today claim to be communist and, indeed, everywhere that socialism has taken a centralist, bureaucratized form.

> The members of a community, it is true, have no private property, but the community is proprietor, and proprietor not only of goods, but also of persons and wills. In consequence of this principle of absolute property labor—which should only be a condition imposed on man by nature—becomes in all communities a human commandment and therefore odious. Passive obedience, irreconcilable with a reflecting will, is strictly enforced. Fidelity to regulations, which are always defective, however wise they may be thought, allows of no complaint. Life, talent, and all the human faculties are the property of the State, which has the right to use them as it pleases for the common good. Private associations are sternly prohibited, in spite of the likes and dislikes of different natures, because to tolerate them would be to introduce small communities within the large ones . . . Communism is oppression and slavery. Man . . . wishes to dispose of his own time, to be governed only by necessity, to choose his friendships, his recreation and his discipline; to act from judgment, not by command; to sacrifice himself through unselfishness, not through servile obligation. Communism is essentially opposed to the free exercise of our faculties, to our noblest desires, to our deepest feelings.

At the same time, while attacking the utopians for a doctrinaire desire to freeze human lives within a static society, Proudhon was not an individualist in the manner of contemporaries like Stirner. The essentially sociological aspect of his outlook appears when he discusses the question of property in relation to work. Labor alone, he contends, is the basis of value, but it does not confer a right to property, since labor does not create the means out of which the product is made. And this means does not consist only of the raw material provided by nature, but also of the vast heritage of installations built by our forerunners, the accumulated techniques and traditions of civilization, and, perhaps most important, the element of cooperation in labor that makes each man's work so much more effective than it would be if he acted in solitude. It is evident why Marx should have regarded *What is Property?* as a seminal work in the development of political economy; it is also evident that Marx's own conception of socialist economics owed a great deal more to Proudhon than Marxists admit.

Yet despite its many important insights, one is impressed by the relatively undeveloped form of Proudhon's thought in *What is Property?* As Theodore Royssen remarked, there is a "static quality" about it; "history in the real sense of the word occupies hardly any place." This

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fact cannot be dissociated from the sharply limited nature of Proudhon's experience at this time. What he is discussing is property as seen by the peasant, and his solution is an agrarian one. But if little attention is paid here to industries that cannot be run by independent artisan "possessors," we should remember that up to 1840 Proudhon had slight contact with the industrial revolution that was developing during the July monarchy in France. The railway, pioneer of industrialism, had not reached his native Franche-Comté, and the Latin Quarter of Paris, with which he was familiar, has remained to this day a stronghold of small workshops. It was in later works, after he had come into contact with the movement of history through his observation of the industrial proletariat in Lyons and his participation in the revolution of 1848, that Proudhon's social views took on movement and perspective.

ANOTHER REASON FOR THE "STATIC" QUALITY in *What is Property?* is to be found in a lingering utopian influence that made Proudhon desire, even though he declared emphatically "I build no system," to envisage at least the possibility of a permanent social stabilization. *What is Property?* is more influenced by Hegelianism than any of his other books, and in the acceptance of a stabilizing synthesis (the reign of "Liberty," product of the marriage of property and communism), there enters a chiliastic element similar to that which brings Marxian history to a halt in the final stasis of eternalized and generalized quasi-utopia.

Such a solution was both unsatisfactory in terms of social reality and unsympathetic to Proudhon's critical temperament, and later, in such works as *The Philosophy of Poverty* (1846) and its successors, he abandoned the Hegelian formulae and adopted a method of antinomical argument that fitted more closely, not only his own passion for exploring each side of every argument, but also the pattern of mutually warring contradictions which he perceived within society. This elaborate exploration of contradictions is the cause of much of the confusion that has arisen over Proudhon's ideas, but it also gave rise to a more acceptable view of the progress of society, not towards an ideal and a historical construction, but towards a dynamic and developing equilibrium of varied forces. Proudhon was not a cyclical thinker; he shared the nineteenth-century belief in progress, but he did not trade in teleological speculations, and anything in the nature of a perfect society he came to regard as not merely impossible, but also undesirable. Imperfection and conflict were the attributes of life as he saw it, and when he considered the nature of war (in *War and Peace,* 1861), he saw the end of military struggle only as a transition to an intensification of productive struggle in industry and culture. In his view, society moved, and would always move, by an organic rhythm of constant growth, and even his favorite concept of Justice was not an idealist absolute, but a quasi-anthropological entity that grew with man's

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development and in a measure shared his limitations. "We are born perfectible; we shall never be perfect. Perfection, immobility, would be death."

It was in the decade between the publication of *What is Property?* and the accession of Louis Napoleon to the Presidency of the Second Republic in 1849 that Proudhon gathered the experiences that were basic to his later and most important books. An insight into the role of the working class which led him in 1842 to declare: "Workers, laborers, men of the people, the initiative of reform is yours," was confirmed and strengthened when he went to Lyons in the following year and encountered the Mutualists, a proletarian secret society which had abandoned Jacobin ideas of political conspiracy in favor of industrial association. His contact with these men strengthened Proudhon's faith in the workers ("The people are better judges than all their critics") and increased his apolitical bias. "The new socialist movement will begin by . . . the war of the workshop," he wrote in his diary, and added another thought that echoed through the history of Latin Syndicalism down to the Spanish Civil War when he noted: "The social revolution is seriously compromised if it comes through a political revolution."

THE REVOLUTION OF 1848 proved the most important single event in Proudhon's life, as in the lives of a whole generation of European radicals. He was one of the few active participants, in France or elsewhere, who immediately recognized the social character of the Revolution and detected the emergence of the working class as an autonomous force. But he was appalled by the ineptitude of the Jacobins and liberals at the head of the second Republic, whose minds were full of the democratic political ideals of 1789 and 1793, but who had no conception of the problems that had gained urgency from the rapid impetus of the industrial revolution. "They have made a revolution without ideas," he lamented on the day of the Republic's foundation, and a few weeks later he denounced the palliative measures of the government, such as the herding of the unemployed into the National Workshops, as "the organization of poverty."

As a delegate to the National Assembly, and in his efforts to found a credit bank for the workers, he strove to give some positive social content to the revolution, but it was as a journalistic critic that he was effective. His first paper, *Le Répresentant du Peuple,* appeared under the motto: "What is the Producer? Nothing. What should he be? Everything." From the beginning he maintained that the inadequacy of political liberalism in a time of social revolution forced the workers to find their own economic solution. "The proletariat must emancipate itself without the help of the government," he remarked before the revolution was two months old, and after the rising of the faubourgs in June he recognized immediately that "the first and determining cause of the insurrection was the social question, the social crisis, work,

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ideas." It was in the month after the rising, in introducing to the National Assembly a proposal for a moratorium on rents and debts to alleviate public distress, that he defined most boldly the class struggle that had become dramatically evident in French life.

Having stated his ultimate aim as the liquidation of property, and called upon the proprietors to accept voluntarily the first step in that direction, he added: "In the case of refusal we ourselves shall proceed to the liquidation without you." "Whom do you mean by *you?*" shouted his audience. "When I employed these two pronouns, *you* and *we,*" said Proudhon, "it is evident that in that moment I was identifying *myself* with the *proletariat,* and that I was identifying *you* with the *bourgeois class.*" "It is the social war," his rivals shouted. "Capital is afraid," Proudhon replied, "and its instinct is not wrong: the eye of socialism is upon it."

The *Communist Manifesto* had expressed very similar sentiments to a restricted audience a few months before, but it was Proudhon in this debate who first drew to the attention of the wider public of Europe the fact that socialism would henceforward become identified, not with the plans of utopian dreamers, but with the concrete and daily struggle of the working class. His comparative loneliness in this recognition was illustrated by the fact that, when the Assembly came to a vote, only one man, an old Lyons Mutualist, voted with him, while the utopian socialists demonstrated their failure to recognize the social realities of the time by abstaining.

Proudhon's defiance of the increasingly reactionary tendencies that emerged in France during the latter part of 1848 led him eventually to a three-year prison sentence for having the foresight to accuse Louis Bonaparte of monarchical ambitions. Prison, he wryly declared, was "just like Icaria," but it was remarkably lenient by present-day standards, and, after the frantic activity of the revolutionary year, he made use of his enforced leisure to work out the constructive elements of his social outlook. His brief and dramatic interval as a man of action was ended, and it is in the books of the period after his entry into prison that we encounter the development and refinement of his contributions to socialist thought.

CRAMMED WITH A BAROQUE ABUNDANCE of scholarship and written in a classic prose that was admired by Sainte-Beuve, Baudelaire and Flaubert, these later books, from *Confessions of a Revolutionary* (1849) down to the posthumously published *Political Capacity of the Working Class,* cover a vast range of miscellaneous topics, from theories of taxation to studies of the social relevance of art, from literary copyright to Biblical exegesis. Contradictions and ambiguities abound, and in this fertile jungle of argument it has not been difficult for the disingenuous to find texts which, wrenched from their contexts, make Proudhon appear as the advocate of reactionary doctrines that are plainly contrary to the general direction of his thought. Yet in fact the main

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themes of Proudhon's political philosophy, the themes that have most relevance for the modern student, remain surprisingly constant. They can be divided into three categories: 1. His criticism of the Jacobin idea of political revolution and centralized government, and his substitution of a view of social revolution based on a decentralized mutualist economy. 2. His theory of federalism as a solution to the problems of national administration and international relationships. 3. His theory of the political function of the working class as an autonomous revolutionary force moving towards its own liberation.

At no time during his career could Proudhon be regarded as favorable to the Jacobin attitude, but it was the experience of 1848 that revealed to him in full the hollowness of a political revolution unsupported by a revolution in economic relationships. Universal suffrage was the great watchword of the Jacobins of 1848, and they saw little beyond, but for Proudhon this reform was pointless outside the context of a social transformation. "How could universal suffrage reveal the thought, the real thought of the people," he argued in *Confessions of a Revolutionary,* "when the people is divided by inequality of fortune into classes subordinate one to the other and voting either through servility or through hate; when this same people, held in restraint by authority, is incapable notwithstanding its sovereignty of expressing its ideas on anything; and when the exercise of its rights is limited to choosing, every three or four years, its chiefs and its imposters?"

In Jacobinism, Proudhon saw, not a genuine movement towards liberation, but a "hypocrisy of progress," which, in dreaming of liberty without social vision, merely produced dictatorship. The real struggle was between the extremes of absolutism and socialism, and for Proudhon socialism was not the rigid doctrine of the Icarians, who take "their hypotheses for reality and their utopias for institutions," but a dynamic and realistic viewpoint based on the observation of society, not as one would like to make it, but as it is, with its inherent contradictions and conflicts. It was in this way, as "a phenomenon of our collective life," that he assessed political institutions. "The best form of government, like the most perfect of religions," he concluded, "is a contradictory idea. The problem is not to know how we shall be best governed, but how we shall be most free. Liberty adequate and compatible with order, that is all the reality which is contained in power and politics." And thus he saw the development of society as a progress from the authoritarian concept of centralized power. Proudhon was no millenarian; he did not believe that liberty could be achieved in a single leap, in a sudden Bakuninist overturning of the edifices of power. On the contrary, he often declared that anarchy—the society of free contracts—might take centuries to mature, and that it was likely to come through a long process of equilibration. "Equality comes to us by a succession of tyrannies and governments, in which liberty is continually at grips with absolutism like Israel and Jehovah."

What remains most important in Proudhon's criticism of the Jacobins is the shift of viewpoint from politics as a self-subsistent entity

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to politics as a changing and dispensable social phenomenon, the shift of objective from the seizure of power over men to the achievement of economic organization between men. This attitude is closely linked to a view of revolution as a spontaneous social force, not created politically, but rising from the needs of the people and irresistible in its eventual triumph. Social revolution had become inevitable, Proudhon believed, because of the limitations of the men of 1789, who had ignored the economic revolution called for by the abolition of feudalism. "The Republic should have established Society; it thought only of establishing Government . . . Therefore, while the problem propounded in '89 seemed to be officially solved, fundamentally there was a change only in governmental metaphysics—what Napoleon called *ideology* . . . "

The suggestions for social reform which Proudhon puts forward in such works as *The General Idea of the Revolution* (1851) are in fact not so strictly apolitical as those of later anarchists like Kropotkin. They take rather the form of a pluralist socialism, in which the political is subordinated to the social. In opposition to the centralized nationalism of Jacobin democracy, Proudhon's vision is characterized by the utmost degree of administrative decentralization.

> Unless democracy is a fraud, and the sovereignty of the people a jest, it must be admitted that each citizen in the sphere of his industry, each municipal, district or provincial council within its own territory, is the only natural and legitimate representative of the sovereign (people), and that therefore each locality should act directly and by itself in administering the interests which it includes and should exercise full sovereignty in relation to them. The people are nothing but the organic union of individually free wills, which can and should work voluntarily together, but never abdicate their freedom. Such a union must be sought in the harmony of their interests, not in an artificial centralization, which, far from expressing the collective will, expresses only the antagonism of individual wills.

Where necessary—but only where necessary—the individual control of work and the direct contact between man and man are replaced by associational bodies. One such body is the commune, organ of local administration, which should have full independence, unsupervised by any centralized authority, in the conduct of public works and local affairs, even in the making of laws. Other undertakings, like railways, factories and harbors, would be administered by associations of workers, and parents and teachers would come together to conduct a form of education integrated to industrial and professional apprenticeship. Litigation would be replaced by the arbitration of *ad hoc* juries of neighbors, and courts, those beach-heads of autocracy, from which Proudhon himself had suffered, must be eliminated as the first act of the revolution.

Such generalized suggestions are as near as Proudhon ever gets to the blueprinting of an ideal society. In his reaction from utopia he was as disinclined as Marx to plan in detail for other men, and at times he seems to have retreated into unnecessary vagueness. His positive

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suggestions are indeed considerably less impressive than his exposures of the Jacobin political fixations, and this is not entirely due either to the fact that he himself was personally better fitted for the role of critic or to that lack of precise detail and rigid structure which is inevitable in a libertarian social vision. Beyond these factors, there is a naively optimistic tendency to see reason as over-powerful, a faith in man's propensity to detect his own good that is not wholly borne out by experience. It is true that the solution of social ills rests by definition on a social level, and can only be attained when political centralization has been replaced by a much more basic administration of economic affairs than existed in Proudhon's time or exists today. The arguments for workers' control of industry, for regional and local autonomy as an antidote to bureaucratic centralism, are convincing, but only the hardy idealist would suggest today that the solution can be quite so simple a matter of contractual adjustment as, in his more optimistic flights, Proudhon suggested. Nor, indeed, did Proudhon consistently hold this view; there were times when he stressed less the peaceful agreement than the fruitful conflict of a free society, while the very fact that he still envisaged the presence of local "laws" suggests that he felt the need for sanctions of a moral and possibly even a physical character.

IT IS NECESSARY TO DISTINGUISH between what Proudhon meant by federation and what is meant by those who nowadays think in terms of a kind of super-centralized government to administer Europe or the world. Such a parody of federation would mean an intensification of the very centralism which Proudhon dreaded, the creation of an authority all the more dangerous because of its concentration of power. He was in fact so opposed to centralized power that he envisaged federation, not as a means of establishing authority over existing states, but as a way of dissolving them. A union between these states would suffer from the inequality between them, and hence he stressed "the interior distribution of sovereignty and government," the breakdown of that national unity—which in history has always been productive of war without and exploitation within—into smaller units where "there is nothing for the bourgeoisie to profit from" and the vigilance of the people can be most actively promoted.

Confederation, like the revolution, should begin with the people; it should build upwards from the most primary levels. The basic administration should be local and as near the direct control of the workers as possible. Hence, while safety demanded a strict limitation on the largeness of units, social necessity need set no limits on their smallness. "Any agglomeration of men, comprised within a clearly circumscribed territory and able to live an independent life in that spot, is meant for autonomy." In this way the smallest regional or racial enclave could enjoy its independence and participate in federal cooperation with its neighbors of differing outlooks without sacrificing its own way of living.

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Above the primary level of small autonomous units, confederal organization should become progressively less a matter of administration than of cooperation between the "natural groups." A series of delegations would bring together the common economic interests of the various units, and in each region would coalesce in a central committee whose function would be confined to the coordination of interests in accordance with the general will. Its complete sensitiveness would be assured by the perpetual revocability of any delegation as soon as it ceased to act in harmony with the group it represented. Since the "natural groups" which formed the confederation would in their turn be based on the working units—the cooperative associations and productive exchanges—within society, the nature of the state would change from political to economic, and Saint-Simon's vision of the government of men being replaced by the administration of things would be finally achieved.

If anywhere, it is in this plan of the federal society that, by the happy process of paradox, we find the utopia of the great anti-utopian, a utopia in negative, with casual agreement replacing minute regulation as its basic pattern. Proudhon, moreover, differed from most of the utopians in realizing the need to face the immediate problems of a society yet unripe for revolutionary change. Total federalism might be sketched as a destination, but the way there had to be traced through the jungle of nineteenth-century international politics, and often Proudhon was faced with decisions which could not be postponed. Always, he stood out against the proliferation of new and aggressive national states and sought to encourage any kind of decentralist tendency that might set the tide of events running in the direction of an international outlook.

Nor did he restrict his hopes of internationalism to the political field. In the background he saw the anonymous power of the working class, a latent force that would soon play its independent part in the determination of history. To make that class conscious of its role and its potentialities was the final task to which he turned his attention. The international identity of the workers' interests had long preoccupied him; even before 1848 he had dreamed of a mutualist association that would spread over the whole world; and after the disillusionments of the Revolution his faith was renewed in the revival of French working-class activity during the early 1860s, a revival in which he played a considerable role. The Jacobins had been discredited among the more militant workers for their ineptitude during 1848; the utopians had declined into minor cults which suffered from the failure of their attempts to create socialist communities in the New World; Marx and his doctrines were as yet almost unknown. Proudhon alone stood as a symbol of plebeian resistance, and his anti-political campaign of 1863, when he called for abstention from voting as a means of undermining the Empire, appealed to a working class that was tired of the existing political situation. It was to these reawakened workers that he addressed his last book, *The Political Capacity of the Working Classes.*

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In this book Proudhon celebrates the arrival of the urban proletariat as a new social force. Like all other historically significant classes, it has become conscious of its collective identity, and the idea which it pursues as a result of this dawning self-consciousness is that of mutuality. The possession and development in real terms of this idea distinguishes the working class (including the peasants) from the bourgeisie, and gives it a progressive character. The *laissez faire* bourgeois ideology eschews mutuality, and consequently the bulk of the middle class declines into a subordinate stratum at the mercy of the monopolists whose viewpoint it still accepts. But the workers, by developing their sense of mutuality, can at last bring justice into the economic life of society by organizing its functions on an egalitarian basis.

Proudhon believes that against the *grande bourgeoisie,* the real capitalists, the struggle must be pursued without hope of reconciliation. But he does not exclude that larger section of the middle class whose independence is threatened with extinction; their alliance should be sought so that the whole community may move towards liberation without that violence of civil war which Proudhon always regarded as inimical to progress.

Thus, while regarding the proletariat as a progressive class which would spread the leaven of mutuality, he did not, like the Blanquists and the Marxists, envisage it as an élite, destined to assume power and govern by class dictatorship, either delegated or direct. "Federalism is the alpha and omega of my policy," he insisted, "and to be realized that solution requires the participation of the whole people."

IT IS NOT POSSIBLE HERE TO INVESTIGATE the wide influence of Proudhon's theories in the First International and the Paris Commune, in European revolutionary syndicalism and Mexican agrarianism, in such movements of the English-speaking countries as Guild Socialism and the I.W.W. What is more to our immediate point is the fact that the split between the social democrats and Proudhon's disciples, which was given finality (over the protesting voices of such socialist pioneers as William Morris, Keir Hardie and Robert Blatchford) in the expulsion of the libertarian delegates from the International Socialist Congress of 1896, deprived the socialist movement of the very points of view that might have helped to correct the more harmful errors of 20th-century socialism. The failure to foster industrial control by the workers led to that doctrinaire reliance on state control and bureaucratic administration which marred the attempt to achieve socialism in Britain. The lack of a strong federalist policy left socialist parties everywhere helpless in the face of the temptations of nationalism and the threats of war. The tendency to concentrate on the industrial worker to the exclusion of other classes resulted in socialist ineptitude when faced by agrarian problems or by situations, like those in the United States and Canada, where large sections of the workers begin to move culturally and economically into the middle class. Finally, a preoccu-

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pation with political activity, with the mechanics of elections, parliamentary maneuvers and governmental machinery has produced the very Jacobin error which Proudhon castigated—the tendency to seek a speciously easy way out through legislation and regulation instead of concentrating on the basic functional changes in social activity on which, in the end, freedom and security alike depend.

Much of Proudhon's work is outdated, and he would have expected nothing else, for he claimed to erect no foolproof system, he eschewed the idea of establishing a party doctrine, and, having lived through 1848, he was well aware how much events can prove a political thinker wrong. "I mistrust an author who pretends to be consistent with himself after twenty-five years," he once said, and he would have viewed with ironic contempt any latter-day admirer who tried to establish a faultless canon from his works. But the general themes that run consistently through his writings still have a great relevance, and those who are puzzled by the unresolved problems of modern socialism may gain from considering some of the aspects of that libertarian point of view which he represented and which was banished from the orthodox socialist movement more than half a century ago.

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BOOKS

A Sampling of Opinions

COMMUNISM, CONFORMITY AND CIVIL LIBERTIES, by Samuel A. Stouffer. Doubleday & Co., New York. 1955. 278 pages. $4.

This book, says the author, was designed to "open a window into the mind of America" and perhaps it has succeeded even better than Mr. Stouffer had intended because, in a way, its motivation and conception, its mode of procedure and its basic premises are as significant as its findings.

The particular regions of the American mind which Mr. Stouffer and his associates have set out to explore were the public's reaction to the twin dangers of "the Communist conspiracy outside and inside (the U.S.A.) and to those who in thwarting the conspiracy would sacrifice some of the liberties which the enemy would destroy." In order to find out what the American people really thought about these problems, Mr. Stouffer approached the Fund for the Republic, obtained a grant of $125,000, set up a questionnaire of more than eighty questions and many times that number of subquestions and hired two research organizations which, in turn, sent out more than five hundred interviewers who interrogated more than six thousand Americans, all carefully chosen at random.

Now, I don't wish to suggest for a moment that there was anything slipshod or ingenuous about this procedure. On the contrary, the questionnaire is a marvel of thoughtfulness and ingenuity, the sampling procedures are as up-to-date as they could be and the devotion of all participants to democracy and science no less than total. But what I do want to point out is that this amazingly straightforward way of putting the question and the methods applied in attaining it, this insistence that what the people think is important and that the way to find out is to go ahead and ask them and trust them to tell the truth, the faith that all this can be done scientifically by a mass apparatus subsidized by an industrial empire which can be relied on not to interfere, this melange of good intentions, practical efficiency and conceptual naivety ought to put us on our guard. The motivation behind the research is the most laudable in the world, the facts unearthed are of enormous importance, but their interpretation could not be more beside the mark.

LET US TURN TO THE FINDINGS first. Probably the single, most important item is the revelation of just how little the American people are worried about either Communism or the threat to civil liberties. Only one per cent of all those questioned spontaneously mentioned these two topics as "the kind of thing they worried about most," while 80 per cent answered in terms of personal, family and business problems. On the one hand this is, of course, pretty much what one

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would expect and, in its way, normal and reassuring. It certainly places us a long way off from that specter of nationwide hysteria which is so often conjured up. On the other hand, this indifference has dangers of its own. Besides, this question covers only the overt attitude of the population, but when the study gets around to probing the covert, or latent, dispositions of the American people, quite a different picture emerges. Here for instance are some of the questions and answers concerning the rights of an admitted Communist (figures for the National Cross Section).

Question: "Should an admitted Communist have his citizenship taken away?"

Answer: Yes, 77 per cent (of those questioned); No, 13 per cent; No opinion, 10 per cent.

Question: "Should an admitted Communist be put in jail?"

Answer: Yes, 51 per cent; No, 34 per cent; No opinion, 15 per cent.

On the government's right to wiretap conversations in order to get evidence against Communists. (I have abbreviated this and some of the following questions — T. F.).

Answer: Yes, 64 per cent; No, 27 per cent; No opinion, 9 per cent.

Here are some of the answers concerning the rights of a man whose loyalty has been questioned but who swears that he is not a Communist.

"Should he be allowed to make a speech in public?"

No 21%; Yes, 71%; No opinion, 9%.

"Suppose he teaches in a college, should he be fired?"

Yes, 22%; No, 69%; No opinion, 9%.

About the rights of socialists (and these are all the answers cited in the book):

"Should a Socialist be allowed to make a public speech?"

No, 31%; Yes, 58% ; No opinion, 11%.

"Should a Socialist be allowed to teach in a college?"

No, 54%; Yes, 33%; No opinion, 33%.

"Should a book written by a Socialist be removed from the libraries?"

Yes, 35%; No, 52%; No opinion, 13%.

And here are some figures cited as corroborative evidence from other surveys: In 1953 those who would deny Socialists the right to publish constituted 45 per cent of the population and those who would forbid newspapers to criticize our form of government comprised 42 per cent.

Limitations of space do not permit more extensive quotation, but I think it is quite clear even from the few figures cited that in the United Stats there exists today, in the author's words "a considerable intolerance of Socialists, atheists and other radicals." I should like to emphasize that tolerance in this context does not mean approval of the non-conformists, but respect for the civil liberties of those they disapprove of. Conversely, intolerance means disrespect for civil liberties, not for persons.

From the answers cited in the book it is likewise clear that this intolerance goes hand in hand with a not inconsiderable popular uncertainty as to exactly what a Communist is like. We also find that those people who did have actual contact with Communists (only 3 per cent of the population) tend to be more tolerant of the rights of non-conformists, though no more fond of their ideology, than those who had no contact.

To come back to the figures cited above. Mr. Stouffer goes to considerable length emphasizing that at least

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two considerations must be kept in mind in interpreting them. First, it must be clearly understood that the quoted percentages are sample readings, which means that no individual figure is to be taken as gospel truth, but that the over-all pattern leaves practically no doubt concerning the general validity of the results. Second, the tendencies revealed by the survey are not inflexible laws of conduct, adhered to steadfastly by a certain, unchanging percentage of the population, but are to be understood as predispositions and attitudes which are susceptible to a good deal of change.

Of the many factors that indubitably influence these dispositions, the author has tabulated six and has shown quite conclusively that, on the question of civil liberties, older people are less tolerant than younger people, Southerners less than the rest of the country, farmers less than city people, women less than men, those who attend church regularly less than those who do not, the uneducated less than the educated. These findings point, of course, toward possible avenues of relief and the author does indeed feel that "the rising level of education, geographical movement of the people and other social, economic and technological forces (press, television, radio—T.F.) are operating slowly and imperceptibly (!) on the side of spreading tolerance."

(I should like to observe, parenthetically, that the author possesses sufficient prudence not to become a slave to the logic of his own findings. Thus he draws no visible conclusion from the discrepancy in tolerance between churchgoers and non-churchgoers, though he was sufficiently concerned to pose the question in the first place; and so far as the intolerance of women is concerned, he wisely refrains from anything even remotely resembling a comment.)

Unfortunately, the ameliorative tendencies enumerated above work only when "all other things are being equal"—which they rarely are—and in the long run; but in the long run, as Lord Keynes once said, we shall all be dead and meanwhile the present is, to paraphrase our author, starkly difficult. The poignancy of our predicament gets an even sharper point from our contemplation of a check-study which is an integral part of this book and which proves conclusively that, on all questions of civil liberties, local leadership was more tolerant than the population at large. The figures show that even the local Commanders of the American Legion and the Regents of the Daughters of the American Revolution, two groups which, by and large, are less tolerant than other local leaders, are consistently more tolerant than the man in the street. The matter becomes even more amazing when we observe, though the author does not, that in the matter of civil liberties the national Republican administration is considerably more tolerant than the local leaders who in turn are much more tolerant than the average American. This finding certainly calls for a good deal of explanation on the part of those who believe that all the answers can be found by going to "the grass roots."

MR. STOUFFER HAS COME UP with the theory of "the second, sober thought" which holds that the instincts of the American people are basically sound, but that every so often they are led astray by the excitements of the day and are ready to "justify . . . drastic measures of repression, including the forfeiture of rights which were centuries in the making." It is Mr. Stouffer's contention that it is then up to the leaders to maintain these civil rights, because when the excitement has died down and the American people have had a second, sober

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look at the situation, their basic instincts of fair play will re-assert themselves. Mr. Stouffer feels, very optimistically, that that's the way things have always happened in the past and, if the local leaders are stout-hearted enough, that is the way it will happen again.

Bernard Rosenberg, one of the editors of DISSENT, writing in the *Jewish Frontier,* has pointed out that there exists a startling discrepancy between the grimness of Mr. Stouffer's findings and his personal reaction, an optimism bordering on fatuousness. There is, as Rosenberg points out quite correctly, something exasperating in the attitude of a man who presents the most formidable figures on current intolerance and then blandly states his belief that television shows like "I Love Lucy" will go a long way to combat these tendencies, or who can say that he came to the conclusion "that most of the *seemingly* intolerant people are good, wholesome Americans" (emphasis added–T.F.).

However the reason for this discrepancy lies not, as Rosenberg suggests, in Stouffer's personality, but in his methodology. We have seen that he is very careful to label the intolerant tendencies which his findings show up as pre-dispositions, that is, as the mental attitudes of individuals. He does, to be sure, mention environmental data such as the South, farms and schools, but they occur only as the locus of individuals, not as determining social factors. This concentration on the individual and the concomitant neglect of political and economic institutions permits Stouffer to "psychologize" intolerance, that is, to declare it to be the *temporary mental aberration* of *individuals* rather than the reflection of *institutionalized wrongs* perpetuated by enduring social interests. Hence his no doubt sincere belief that people are only "seemingly intolerant" and that "a sober second look" will show them what is right.

Now, every child in this country knows that there are ample historical reasons for, say, intolerance in the South and that no second look will convince the intolerant of their wrongness. The way out has been shown by the unanimous opinion of the Supreme Court: change the institutions that perpetuate intolerance and you will destroy intolerance as a social phenomenon. Then, and only then, will it be possible to relegate intoler-

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ance exclusively to the realm of private psychology into which Stouffer has placed it so prematurely. In the meantime, explanations such as he offers help, wittingly or unwittingly (in his case, I am sure, it is unwittingly), to mask the real culprit.

However, I should like to emphasize that the findings of this book far transcend in importance the shortcomings of the interpretation. The reader is well advised to skip the pieties of the exegesis and address himself to the facts. He will find enough to disturb him deeply.

THEODORE FRANKEL

Work in Progress

A HISTORY OF SOCIALIST THOUGHT, by G. D. H. Cole. Vol. I, "The Forerunners, 1789-1850"; 346 pages. $5.00. Vol. II, "Marxism and Anarchism, 1850-1890"; 482 pages. $6.00. St. Martin's Press, Inc., 103 Park Avenue, New York, N. Y.

G. D. H. Cole has undertaken the exceptionally difficult task of preparing a general history of socialist thought as distinguished from a history of the socialist movement. This work, to run to four volumes when complete, is presently at the half-way mark and it is therefore impossible to evaluate it as a whole or even to indicate its general trend or conclusions.

The first volume, covering the period since the great French Revolution to 1850, deals with the development of socialist ideas, particularly its utopian phase and early socialist economies. Professor Cole treats the individual thinkers (Babeuf, Saint-Simon, Owen, Proudhon, etc.) separately, justifying this by the absence of organized movements. The second volume, describing the socialist *movement* from the defeat of the 1848 European revolutions up to the emergence of the Marxian Social Democracy of the 1890's, contains a central theme of the struggle between Marxism and Anarchism. Some of the most informative chapters are on Bakunin and Prince Kropotkin. In this volume, Cole varies considerably his method in that the lives and ideas of the principal characters unfold against the background of revolutions and conflicting movements. In this respect, it is considerably livelier and more energetic than the previous volume. In general, the author sketches a brief outline of a particular thinker, then summarizes his particular contributions to socialist theory and practice and ties this in with the development of the movement.

The third volume is to portray the struggle between revolutionary and reformist wings of the movement, from the birth of the Second International through the Russian Revolution. The final volume is to round out this project by bringing the history of socialist thought up to date.

These two volumes are written in Cole's lively and familiar style and, while adding nothing particularly new or startling to men or subjects which have been handled in more scholarly detail (particularly by the Germans), certainly provide a worthwhile reference and source. Any judgment of Cole's larger contribution to a study of socialist thought must await completion of this "work in progress."

S. P.

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BOOKS RECEIVED

ANDREW JACKSON, SYMBOL FOR AN AGE—by *John William Ward.* Oxford University Press. $4.75. — This book, far from being orthodox history, is an effort to see how the events of history gradually become transformed into popular myth. The author has taken several incidents from the career of Jackson and traced their transmutation in American thought. The result is an important study, written with flair and imagination, of the gradual diffusion of Jacksonism into American society and culture.

THE DRAFTEE AND INTERNAL SECURITY, A STUDY OF THE ARMY, MILITARY PERSONNEL SECURITY PROGRAM—by *Rowland Watts.* Workers Defense League. — This massively documented study is one of the most valuable and important pieces of research into the problem of civil liberties that has yet appeared. Mr. Watts, who has probably done more for the civil rights of dissidents during the past several years than any other American, has dug up vast quantities of material showing how the Attorney General's "Subversive List," presumably intended as nothing more than a guide in government hiring, has been used by the army as a means of penalizing draftees on account of their pre-induction political activities. The tone of the charges brought against these defenseless soldiers is at times unbelievable—even to those with a long unhappy experience with the military mind. Among them are that "Subject's political beliefs were such that many people would accuse him of being 'pink' . . . his father is a member of the National Lawyers Guild . . . subject possesses a copy of *The Reporter* dated 29 September 1953; and also had copies of *The New Republic* and one of *The Nation.* . . . " " In——, while in high school, you wrote a biography of Lenin in which you extolled the efforts of Lenin and Stalin . . . "

Questions asked by a hearing board in regard to "Case 30" include: "did he do a lot of reading? . . . "

The evidence collected here is enormous and, even to hardened dissenters, rather frightening. There cannot be too high praise for Mr. Watts' work.

Does Your Library Subscribe to Dissent?

Miscellany

The Domestic Temper

Matthew Lipman

THE VERY SUMMER which finds the Russian and American governments drawing closer together seems also to find the Russian and American people approximating one another, so far as one can tell, in the quality of their mood. Both give the impression of hopeful, tolerant, bemused docility, innocent of critical insight, free of fundamental doubts, devoid of positive convictions.

This similarity of mood should not come as a surprise when we consider that in some ways the two peoples have been similarly treated—that is, similarly manipulated. Under proper goading, each has been made to assume a stance of hatred toward the other. Because it was artificially induced, it always seemed to be a hollow mock-hatred, similar to the hollow mock-love the two peoples had been led to feel for one another during the war. With the pendulum swinging slightly back, the elaborate mechanisms in both countries which manufacture opinion are again at work to bring about new mass attitudes.

To the American, the Russian has always seemed a fascinating enigma. Subject to the enormous pressures of totalitarian regimes, what does he really feel in his heart? Americans have never been noted for their capacity to size up other people's moods: at times, they have had difficulty in admitting that non-Americans had feelings at all. But this case was different, for somehow, to be able to understand the Russians promised, through a miracle of identification, to shed light on the Americans themselves.

And so the wonderment of what the Russian really felt, once the facade of officially-inspired utterances was removed, was really a query which Americans would like to have directed at themselves, but parried instead. They wondered, how can the Russian people reconcile their government's present exhortations to accept Tito, with previous exhortations to hate him? What, they

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wondered, of the new soft line towards the West, does that not leave the Russian people confused and bewildered? But all these questions really meant was, what do *we* ourselves think, as compared to what we say; or is it true, as our government tells us, that there is no difference between what we profess and what we really believe?

Surely the problem was as distressing in Des Moines as in Kharkov. The American who paused to formulate his bewilderment might have asked himself, in all innocence: if the Russians are as diabolical as we have been told for the past ten years, then the present policies of conciliation and coexistence are pure deceit. If on the other hand the Russians are really not so diabolical after all, but pleasant, friendly chaps, then why were we told they weren't?

But even so simple-minded a formulation is not resorted to. True, if it had been Stevenson and the Democrats who had proposed a lessening of tensions, *that* might have been treasonous. But this new-fangled, conciliatory approach had been initiated by Eisenhower himself, and was therefore beyond question.

Hence the surface faith and optimism, the underlying bewilderment and sense of alienation from any share in the management of their own society's future.

•

THIS FEELING OF DEPENDENCE upon "official" decisions is enhanced when the decisions are made by national leaders on a personal basis. The press gave a great deal of attention to the *personal* quality of Ike's appearance at Geneva, and to the personal quality of the programs he proposed. It emphasized that he acted on his own initiative, almost on the spur-of-the-moment. There was something glamorous, something glorious about it all. How well the man's personal strength of character compensated for the lack of backbone in the administrative bureaucracy, even in the nation at large!

It is frequently thus with leaders, that they shine by contrast. The leader is brilliant, creative, inspired, as contrasted with the dull masses, the hamstrung bureaucrats, the routinized workers, the work-sodden peasantry. And so the personal leader is acclaimed as original because he shows up so well against the conformity of thinking prevalent in his society. That he himself may have helped create that conformity partially in order to make himself stand out all the more pronouncedly is not taken into consideration.

It is not only the personal quality of the leader (as contrasted with our own impersonality) which makes us dependent upon him. It is also his ability to be arbitrary and inconsistent which we cannot match. The more spontaneously he acts, the more he is acclaimed for breaking the old stereotypes of thinking, and consequently the more dependent others become upon him. We were told that reconciliation with the Russians was impossible and war inevitable. Our leaders now deny this, even though it was on their authority that we originally were supposed to believe it. This is infallible evidence of their superiority over the common herd—we ourselves could never have come to a conclusion so daring, without feeling guilty of treachery.

As the gyrations and acrobatics of the leaders on both sides become increasingly more breathtaking, the gap between leaders and led increases. The people no longer trust themselves to think very far ahead, because they know that only the leaders possess the information upon which far-reaching decisions can reasonably be based, and only the leaders possess the intelligence with which to act. And so the populace restricts itself to the immediate surface of events. Passive and appreciative, the people have no confidence in themselves, for the basis of self-confidence and self-esteem—the realization that one is using one's powers in a rational way—is pre-empted by leadership. Only the leaders are entitled to feel rational in this sense; hence the increased dependence of the people, their increased sense of remoteness from the centers of decision and influence.

ALTHOUGH POLITICAL LEADERSHIP in a democracy is supposedly accountable to those who are led, the situation is altered when the means of fabricating consent are available, and when the leaders are able to act inconsistently and unpredictably. For this very inconsistency fosters anxiety on the part of the social group, a feeling of remoteness and dependency.

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Instead of being accountable, the leader retains his control by being *unaccountable*. When, somehow, this unaccountability is then given the trappings of uncanny wisdom, the leader's power is solidified all the more.

But there is one thing about this worthy of particular note. If a man is subjected to equally intensive persuasion from two opposed points of view, and if finally his mood should favor one rather than the other, we may assume that the choice is due to some predisposition on his part. And if he should favor the point of view which he was under less pressure to accept, we might infer that his predisposition in that direction was all the greater. In this case, we observe the Americans under constant pressure for many years to assume the mood and posture of war—and they responded dutifully. Now observe the winds of doctrine shifting to the other direction, and the mood of the people changing correspondingly. But, though the peace pressure is less, the peace response seems greater. Apparently there is some predisposition here which does not favor an atomic war between the two peoples. Apparently when people are afraid of losing their skins, the inducement to a politics that at least seems benign is reenforced by the hope of self-preservation.

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LETTERS

The Issue in England

Editors:

Since you have been good enough to announce the publication (in an abbreviated form) of a recent paper of mine on collectivism (see page 305), I hesitate to take up more of your space, but the discussion of current British politics in your Summer 1955 issue prompts one or two critical reflections. I am in agreement with my old friend W. J. Newman when he suggests that the Labor Party's troubles are in part due to an old-fashioned hankering after plain class alignments, and he is of course quite right to draw attention to recent literature on the subject of working-class support for Conservatism. But apart from the fact that he leans a little too heavily on liberal writers who would like the Labor Party to drop socialism altogether, there is an issue to which he does not pay sufficient attention: the liberal-socialist cleavage over planning.

As long as socialists regard the planning of the national economy as the center-piece of their program, they will be at odds with people who place "welfare" or "equality" first. This also answers his point about the need for Labor to become the "national" party. It can of course do so only if it is able to convince the electorate (and especially the growing managerial stratum) that planning is really in the national interest. Conversely, the growth of such a conviction would automatically resolve the now seemingly insoluble problem of bridging the gap between the working class and the professional middle class.

Mr. Plastrik's comment, on the other hand, while stressing the "managerial" approach of Mr. Gaitskell's friends, omits to point out that Mr. Gaitskell's ineffectiveness as Chancellor was largely responsible for the defeatist mood in which the Party entered the crucial election of 1951, since when it has been on the decline. (The loss of votes, incidentally, took place after that date, and the 1955 total was still above that of 1945.) This ties up with the point I made before: Labor came closest to being the "na-

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tional" party (and also garnered the largest number of votes, relative to the Conservatives and Liberals) at a time when it was able to impress the middle-class electorate with the importance of "planning" to solve the national problem, which is one of economic stagnation in the key industries. The personality of Cripps had much to do with the Party's prestige in those years. When one considers that Aneurin Bevan was his ally in the 1945-50 Cabinet, one catches a glimpse of the political mechanism whereby "laborite" and "managerial" elements can be synthesized at a higher level. It may even be suggested that managerial leadership has the same significance for the labor movement as middle-class leadership had for the old democratic movement, whose following was largely composed of peasant-farmers and shopkeepers.

In such a scheme—which incidentally fits equally well into the Marxian and the Schumpeterian system of social categories and may therefore be described as sociologically neutral—the relevant issue is *not* one of choice between old-fashioned working-class socialism a la Keir Hardie, and modern, up-to-date, neo-liberalism a la Keynes. It is because the British discussion tends to turn on these alleged alternatives that it threatens to become sterile. The question is how the labor movement's drive for greater social equality can be placed behind a planning program which makes sense to the managerial element, and to the electorate generally. Such a program would be socialist by its nature. Whether it would in the short run promote greater equality or welfare is surely a secondary consideration. That it would do so in the long run follows from the assumption—which liberals cannot be expected to share—that a planned economy can, and an unplanned one cannot, cope with the pressing economic problems of a highly industrialized country such as Britain. In fact the real issue in British politics, and within the Labor Party, is precisely this, although the Bevanite rumpus has steadily distracted attention from it. It is also the main issue which socialist theory is called upon to face.

G. L. ARNOLD,
London

CORRECTION!

On page 255, the top paragraph of E. V. Walter's article "The Chimera of Conservatism" in our last issue, a line was inadvertently repeated, displacing the following: "If this is an example of how according to Rossiter) the Conservative . . . ," etc. Our apologies to E. V. Walter and our readers.

And while we're at it: our subscription price was mistakenly listed as $2 per year. It's $2.50—$2.00 for students!

Many Like This

Editors:

I am very happy with the material you have thus far published and I consider such an organ of opinion essential to the furtherance of socialist thought.

If it is possible to get back issues, I would appreciate the prices and numbers you still have. If complete issues are impossible to get, then I would like to know whether or not a reprint of C. Wright Mills' article in Vol. 1 is available.

J. R. H., *Michigan*

(We are trying to obtain back issues to meet the many requests we receive. To the extent that back issues become available, we will fill our readers' requests—EDITORS.)

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TO OUR READERS AND FRIENDS...

(continued from page 290)

To be sure, in the two years of our existence we haven't "solved" the crisis of socialism; but then it would be absurd to suppose that any magazine could. Yet we have printed studies—on the meaning of the socialist ideal, on the lessons of the Labor Government in England, on the nature of Russian society—which have raised significant questions faced by socialists, and indeed non-socialists, and have tried to suggest certain answers.

At the same time we have published articles criticizing various political and intellectual trends of our time, articles not necessarily written from a strictly socialist point of view but from a belief that our culture, sodden with complacence, needs criticism and dissent as nothing else. We have also tried to respond to the events of the day, though here we are frank to admit that because of the difficulties faced by a quarterly when it prints topical pieces, and because of our own limitations, there remains a need for improvement.

In any case, what matters most is this: a magazine now exists which speaks for the independent radical in America. The DISSENT community that has been growing up isn't a party and it isn't a sect; but we work with an increasing sense of having behind us the support of friends who take an active interest in our project. Sometimes, to be frank, we could wish that this interest were a little *more* active—if those friends throughout the country who have written letters in support of our effort were to get some additional subscriptions, or help us get more sales outlets, life would be easier. But that too is beginning, and we are grateful to all who have helped.

III

Without pretending to provide exhaustive answers, we should like simply to note a few of the criticisms that have been made of the magazine. This may not quite satisfy our critics, but it might provoke a fuller discussion in later issues.

item: DISSENT *is too much like the* 1930's, *the same old radical stuff, you're beating a dead horse, etc.*

This complaint often betrays a cultural amnesia, since the truth is that, for good or bad, DISSENT is quite different in content and tone from the radical publications of the thirties. Sometimes this complaint is made on the assumption that the thirties was an undifferentiated mass of villainy or absurdity (the Whittaker Chambers school of history). But this assumption seems to us both false and unhistorical. Much of what went with the radicalism of the thirties none of us would wish to resurrect, but the spirit of social resistance, the impulse to fraternity with the oppressed, the belief that society needs a thorough recasting, are certainly worth preserving.

Sometimes the complaint is made in such a way as to register distaste with the fact that we still believe radical social criticism to be necessary, or that the idea of socialism is still relevant to our time. If so, we can only acknowledge its accuracy.

Yet, we do not, in the main, find this criticism too unflattering. For one

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of the most distressing aspects of American cultural life is the way fads are eagerly seized upon and then dropped—from Marxism to the "new conservatism," from Freud to existentialism, and even from Wilhelm Reich to Adlai Stevenson. It is necessary for serious people, while always trying to reevaluate and reexamine their ideas in the light of new events, also to remain by their convictions, even if they are for the moment unfashionable. (Nor is it too hard to imagine that twenty years from now someone will say, "why that's old hat, just like the stuff in the fifties . . . ")

item: DISSENT *is too polemical, too negative, too harsh in its tone.*

There are times, such as the present, when "negativism" is the most positive task writers can undertake, when it becomes a form of political and intellectual hygiene. As long as the fish stink—and that, by and large, is what they continue to do—then it is necessary to say: the fish stink. This of course, may not please those who have gone into the fish business.

On the matter of "polemical tone" it is necessary to maintain some sense of the context in which the problem arises. Tone is almost always a function of one's point of view. If one believes that all, or almost all, is well with society, then naturally the tone of such a writer is likely to be benign, not to say complacent. But those who believe quite the contrary may sometimes write with asperity and sharpness.

We are aware that this observation can sometimes be used to rationalize coarseness and personal insult, and we have tried to draw a sharp line between polemical vigor and polemical rudeness. But even this is not an easy thing to do, especially in a magazine which does not try to impose any hard-and-fast "line" on its writers.

A few of our friends (those who feel that socialists should confine themselves to sackcloth and ashes) seem to feel that any polemic, no matter how impersonal, is out of place. But we disagree. The next period is likely to be one in which political conformity and intellectual complacence will be greater than ever—and an occasional polemic will be good for sluggish blood.

item: *Socialism is a practical activity, while* DISSENT *is merely a literary venture.*

This seemingly "radical" criticism, sometimes embroidered with references to the unity of theory and practice in Marxist thought, does little more than tell us what we know only too well. Of course, socialism must be a practical activity; of course, publishing a magazine isn't enough. Yet it would be a mistake to suppose that the only practical activity for socialists is to organize parties or run candidates in elections. There are moments, such as the present one, in which the most meaningful activity open to socialists is the effort to keep alive and to refresh their ideas. In that sense, DISSENT may represent, or come to represent, a bridge between the movements of yesterday and those of tomorrow

item: DISSENT *is politically amorphous, it does not take positions on the burning questions of the day, etc.*

This criticism impresses us least, for we know that the "political line"—the position on this, the resolution on that—of the groups or persons who make it is often an ideological cover for the doubts and uncertainties they share with the rest of ordinary mankind. And when these political "lines"

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of the socialist sects are held with rigor, they often reflect a hardening of intellectual arteries.

We are convinced that on this matter DISSENT has made a hopeful and valuable innovation in socialist publication. Our pages are open to any competent expression of radical opinion, and there surely isn't one editor who hasn't sharply disagreed with this or the other article. But we have tried to keep open a flow of ideas, an exchange of opinions that will reflect the critical and problematic nature of socialist thought at the present moment. Whatever value party lines may have for parties, there could hardly be anything more preposterous than a party line without a party.

item: DISSENT *is off to a good start, but sometimes the articles aren't sufficiently thorough, the writing isn't incisive enough, there are too many (or is it not enough?) cultural articles, the journalism isn't lively enough.*

We agree.

IV

Finally, a word to our friends.

The editors of DISSENT have borne a heavy burden—in work, in effort, financially. The magazine has survived through the devotion of a handful of people. We feel that we have by now sufficiently demonstrated our seriousness, that we have by now sufficiently shown our capacities, to allow us to ask for greater support.

We are not running a new fund drive this year—but it would help tremendously if those of you who haven't yet paid up your pledges were to do so quickly. And it would be equally helpful if you were to use DISSENT as a Christmas gift (see the back cover). Our great need right now is for a group of people scattered throughout the country who will actively try to promote the magazine and enlarge its circulation. We are prepared to continue, but we want to do it in the company of those people who feel that the idea of DISSENT is important to their lives.

THE EDITORS

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